

“STRONG WE MAKE EACH OTHER”: EMMA GOLDMAN,  
THE AMERICAN AIDE TO MUJERES LIBRES DURING  
THE SPANISH CIVIL WAR, 1936-1939

A Master's Thesis

by

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THE DEPARTMENT OF  
HISTORY  
BİLKENT UNIVERSITY  
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THE SPANISH CIVIL WAR, 1936-1939

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by

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in

THE DEPARTMENT OF  
HISTORY  
BİLKENT UNIVERSITY  
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June 2010

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## ABSTRACT

### **“STRONG WE MAKE EACH OTHER”: EMMA GOLDMAN, THE AMERICAN AIDE TO MUJERES LIBRES DURING THE SPANISH CIVIL WAR, 1936-1939**

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This thesis explores the American immigrant anarcho-feminist Emma Goldman’s (1869-1940) affiliation with the Spanish anarcho-feminist organization Mujeres Libres [Free Women] during the Spanish Civil War both as a guide and an aide. No study devoted exclusively to Emma Goldman’s relation with Mujeres Libres has ever been published. The aim of this thesis is two-fold: firstly, it redresses the current historiography arguing that rather than Mujeres Libres, Emma Goldman pioneered the anarcho-feminist ideology. Goldman acted as a guide to Mujeres Libres in its dual commitment to anti-fascist struggle and sexual emancipation. Secondly, this thesis shows that out of her solidarity with Mujeres Libres, Goldman carried the anarcho-feminist movement onto the international platform through her propaganda and fund-raising activities for the refugees of the Spanish Civil War.

**Key words:** Emma Goldman, Mujeres Libres, anarcho-feminism, Spanish Civil War, anarchism, empowerment, Spanish Civil-War refugees, propaganda and fund-raising activities

## ÖZET

### “BİRBİRİMİZİ GÜÇLÜ KILIYORUZ”: EMMA GOLDMAN, İSPANYA İÇ SAVAŞINDA “ÖZGÜR KADINLARIN” AMERİKALI YARDIMCISI, 1936-1939

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Bu tez Amerikalı göçmen anarko-feminist Emma Goldman'ın (1869-1940) İspanya İç Savaşı sırasında İspanyol anarko-feminist grup Özgür Kadınlar [Mujeres Libres] ile olan bağlantısını kılavuzluğu ve yardımcılığı çerçevesinde ele almaktadır. Emma Goldman'ın sadece Özgür Kadınlar ile olan ilişkisini konu alan bir çalışma şimdiye kadar yapılmamıştır. Bu tezin iki amacı vardır. Birincisi, bu konudaki tarih yazıcılığını düzelterek, Özgür Kadınlar'dan ziyade, Emma Goldman'ın anarko-feminist düşünceye önderlik ettiğini göstermektir. Goldman Özgür Kadınlar'a faşizm karşıtlığı ve cinsel yönden özgürleştirme yolunda kılavuzluk etmiştir. Bu tezin ikinci amacı ise, Özgür Kadınlar ile olan dayanışması sonucunda, Goldman'ın İspanya İç Savaşı mültecileri için yaptığı propaganda ve para yardımı toplama etkinlikleriyle anarko-feminist hareketi uluslararası platforma taşımış olduğunu göstermektir.

**Anahtar sözcükler:** Emma Goldman, Özgür Kadınlar, anarko-feminizm, İspanya İç Savaşı, anarşizm, güçlendirme, İspanya İç Savaşı mültecileri, propaganda ve para yardımı etkinlikleri

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

*If ever there were a people who love liberty sufficiently to struggle for it, live it in their daily relations and even die for it, the Spanish workers and peasants have demonstrated that they stand at the highest peak.*

Emma Goldman, 14/1/1940<sup>1</sup>

Such were the final words of Emma Goldman, American anarchist, about the revolutionary spirit of the Spanish people. Fascism had triumphed in Spain a year earlier, but even in an isolated position in Canada, she continued her enthusiastic struggle to be of help to her defeated Spanish comrades by raising funds for women and children refugees from the Spanish Civil War. This thesis will track Emma Goldman's (1869-1940) participatory social experience with the Spanish anarcho-feminist organization Mujeres Libres [Free Women] (1936-1939), a women's branch of the anarcho-syndicalist organization the CNT [National Confederation of Labor], to which she affiliated herself in the Spanish Civil War. The aim of the thesis is twofold. Firstly, it will enrich the historiography on Emma Goldman by introducing

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<sup>1</sup> Emma Goldman, qtd. in David Porter, ed., preface to *Vision On Fire: Emma Goldman on the Spanish Revolution*, (California: AK Press, 2006).



her as an anarcho-feminist other than being a mere anarchist or feminist. The main thrust of argument here is that her writings and activities in America as far back as three decades before carried the undertones of anarcho-feminism even before Mujeres Libres initiated its own movement in the mid 1930s. This will show that Emma Goldman was the pioneer of the anarcho-feminist ideology. However, she would find the ground conducive to emphasizing herself as an anarcho-feminist in the anarchist socio-political context of the Spanish Civil War.

Secondly, the thesis will show that anarcho-feminism as a new ideology developed in an international context across England, Canada, and the USA as a result when Emma Goldman reinforced her solidarity with Mujeres Libres. Goldman helped Mujeres Libres with its consciousness-raising efforts for Spanish women, and then she became the official fund-raiser and propagandist on behalf of the Spanish refugees at the London section of the SIA [International Antifascist Solidarity].

During her years in America Emma Goldman had rendered her services in social work to the poor and women. She practiced as a nurse and midwife. One of the leading anarchist propagandists of America, she called mass meetings and attended continental lecture tours in the face of injustice that went against her anarchist stance. She was imprisoned several times and in the end exiled by the US government. She had just turned sixty-seven in exile when she involved herself with the Spanish Revolution in September 1936. Despite her old age, she proved passionate about the Spanish anarchists' cause and became more outspoken when it came to the lack of emancipation among Spanish women.

Emma Goldman became the only-recorded aide to Mujeres Libres. According to David Porter, the editor of *Vision On Fire: Emma Goldman on the Spanish*

*Revolution*, “By the early 1930s Goldman herself was well-known by this name among many Spanish anarchists as an influential writer. Cheap pamphlets she had written and her translated essays had been issued by the Spanish anarchist press in the 1920s and 1930s, including her writings on Russia, marriage and love, prostitution, and the liberated woman.”<sup>2</sup> A follower of Michail Bakunin (1814-1876) and Peter Kropotkin (1842-1921), she was labelled the “Queen of the Anarchists” and “the Most Dangerous Woman in America” by the press.

Emma Goldman was an anarchist agitator, public speaker, birth-control advocate, anti-conscription agitator, and sexual radical. With her appeal to women to determine their own lives with their individual fight, Emma Goldman was the first to contribute to anarchist thinking. In the same vein, as Mary Nash, historian of Spanish women in the Civil War, suggests, “*Mujeres Libres*, formed in 1936, was the first working-class women’s movement to espouse both the revolutionary and the feminist causes on an equal basis. It was in fact the first mass women’s organization to attempt to put anarcho-feminism into practice.”<sup>3</sup> Goldman, on the other hand, was the US pioneering anarcho-feminist, as she was the first person to emphasize women’s concerns along with her anarchist principles.<sup>4</sup>

The body of literature of biographies of Emma Goldman mainly draws on the attempt to place her in a fixed ideological camp either as a feminist or an anarchist. However, researchers working on her have not reached a consensus yet if she is to be defined as a mere feminist or a mere anarchist occasionally interested in women’s concerns. There have been attempts to emphasize her anarcho-feminist stance in

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<sup>2</sup> Porter, 38.

<sup>3</sup> Mary Nash, *Defying Male Civilization: Women in the Spanish Civil War*, (Colorado: Arden Press, 1995), 80-81.

<sup>4</sup> Bonnie Dark Haaland, “Sexuality, Reproduction and Anarchy: Emma Goldman and the Impurity of the State” (PhD diss., University of Toronto, 1992), 234.

some doctoral dissertations,<sup>5</sup> but published works introducing her in this light have so far remained next-to-nonexistent. One of the very few who introduce Emma Goldman as an anarcho-feminist is Roxane Dunbar-Ortiz. In her introduction to *Quiet Rumours: An Anarcha-Feminist Reader* (1992), Ortiz explains the tenuous position of anarcho-feminism within the historiography of women's studies, "Up until recently the terms Anarchism and Feminism were rarely found in the same sentence, much less interpreted as integrally related. Indeed "anarcha-feminist" would appear almost an oxymoron, Emma Goldman being the single example most people could identify as such."<sup>6</sup>

The inability to describe Emma Goldman as an anarcho-feminist is to some degree due to the fact that she never declared herself by this term. She was merely a self-proclaimed anarchist; "the Most Dangerous Woman in America" according to the press, but she clearly rejected being called a feminist in the sense of late 19th-century American suffragist feminism. She was also denounced by the feminists of her day, anyhow, for being "an enemy of women's rights,"<sup>7</sup> due to her anti-suffrage stance. However, revisionist historiography which revamped Goldman in the 1970s insisted on juxtaposing her with the suffragist feminists of the nineteenth century.

Before the Spanish Civil War, anarcho(a)-feminism or anarchist feminism had evoked an inability to describe precisely the nature and motives of the movement. This was due to the absence of a particular mass socio-political background both in America and Europe with which to affiliate anarcho-feminism. Leading anarchists of the nineteenth century had been averse to the idea of women

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<sup>5</sup> See Donna Marie Kowal, "The Public Advocacy of Emma Goldman: An Anarcho-Feminist Stance Human Rights" (PhD diss., University of Pittsburg, 1996).

<sup>6</sup> Dark Star, ed., introduction to *Quiet Rumours: An Anarcha-feminist Reader*, (San Francisco: AK Press, 1992), 9.

<sup>7</sup> Alix Kates Shulman, ed., "Emma Goldman's Feminism: A Reappraisal," in *Red Emma Speaks: An Emma Goldman Reader*, (New York: Humanity Books, 1998), 4.

demanding roles out of the private sphere. French anarchist Pierre-Joseph Proudhon, for example, saw the patriarchal family as the core social unit in the society without laws. He denounced divorce and expected that women should attend to domestic chores. Russian anarchist Peter Kropotkin also thought in the same line. He was not against women involving in active political work, but he disapproved of women who put feminism ahead of their devotion to the male working-class.<sup>8</sup> In brief, the anarchist milieu of Europe and America was an aggressively masculine world, as male anarchists could not go beyond Victorian concepts of womanhood.

Thus, anarcho-feminism became a debatable concern within the broader anarchist movement. When it came to its basic tenets, most researchers have tended to equate it with 19th century American suffragist feminism. In fact, the two had different aims. As Margaret S. Marsh, one of the few researchers of the American anarcho-feminism, suggests, suffragists maintained that “the state was but the larger family, the nation the old homestead”; thus they aimed to extend women’s nurturing skills from the family circle to the larger society. However, their demand for legal and political rights for this purpose was unacceptable to anarcho-feminists. Anarcho-feminists argued that gender distinctions were not valid in determining roles. In an egalitarian society there was no inherent intellectual or psychological differences between the sexes. Child-rearing, political life, or work must be based on capacity and preference, not on gender.<sup>9</sup>

As the twentieth century dawned, in America, the woman’s movement became all the more rigorous in its call for equality at the ballot box. Specifically, during the 1910s a great number of participants from every range of ideologies

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<sup>8</sup> Margaret S. Marsh, *Anarchist Women, 1870-1920*, (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1981), 49-174.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, 19.

joined the movement. Nancy F. Cott, the author of *The Grounding of Modern Feminism* (1987), relates the all-encompassing character of this decade:

That was the only decade in which woman suffrage commanded a mass movement, in which working-class women, black women, women on the radical left, the young, and the upper class joined in force; socialists and capitalists taking the same platform. Socialist Party members concentrated on rousing working-class support for woman suffrage, taking vigorous and efficacious parts in the western state campaigns and in New York.... The vote was woman's duty because the US government was inadequate in areas where mothers' skills were needed, such as schooling, caring for criminals, or dealing with unemployment.<sup>10</sup>

As seen, the suffragists wanted to sustain their traditional roles in these areas through the ballot where the state proved inefficient. Socialist feminists also advocated suffrage. During the Socialist Party's peak years from 1908 to 1912, women members like their anarchist counterparts were ignored in the party ranks. To avoid inferior treatment, Socialist feminists, led by Charlotte Perkins Gilman, readily opted for suffragism.<sup>11</sup>

Aside from Emma Goldman, the leading anarchist women in America were Margaret Anderson, Helena Born, Voltairine de Cleyre, Maria Ganz, and Mollie Steimer. Margaret S. Marsh, in her work *Anarchist Women*, describes the common features of these leading anarchist women of America: "Women anarchists were not successful propagandists. Their creation and elaboration of an ideology that placed marriage and the nuclear family at the center of their analysis of feminine subordination received little favorable attention outside the anarchist movement and often generated hostility within it."<sup>12</sup> What made Goldman the most-renowned among these women was her being a successful propagandist striving to juxtapose

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<sup>10</sup> Nancy F. Cott, *The Grounding of Modern Feminism*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1987), 30.

<sup>11</sup> Marsh, 162.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, 100.

sexual concerns of women with the anarchist cause. With her feverish rhetoric and theatrical presentation before the masses, she was the first to introduce women's sexual concerns to anarchist principles. Thus, she inspired other anarchist women. As Marsh continues, Margaret Anderson and her friends from the bohemian ranks of Chicago and New York became Goldman's admirers and brought their sexual views into the anarchist movement.<sup>13</sup>

Temma Kaplan, historian of Spanish anarchism, corroborates Marsh's argument; she says, "In New York, Goldman was tremendously influential on other women radicals, as a role model and practitioner of the New Morality."<sup>14</sup> By 1910, Emma Goldman had delivered many talks about women's sexual concerns. In 1910, her articles on women covered in *Anarchism and Other Essays* was published. In this debate of suffragism, however, Goldman held an adverse attitude towards the campaigners. She was against the prevailing American political system, thus any attempt to strengthen it through suffrage, even if it opened new venues for women's skills in the areas mentioned above, went against her ideals. In that sense, she also was at odds with the left-leaning Greenwich Village feminists who were supportive of motherhood, free love, birth control but who were at the same time suffragists.

Emma Goldman's contemporary, anarchist Voltairine de Cleyre (1866-1912) was one of the few who emphasized Goldman's anarcho-feminist stance. She asserted, "Emma Goldman is the anarchist feminist best remembered today."<sup>15</sup> Voltairine de Cleyre also pointed to marriage as the death-bed of love; she cherished the free love theory and saw the ballot as corruptive for women. However, as Marsh

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<sup>13</sup> Ibid., 94.

<sup>14</sup> Temma Kaplan, "Women and Communal Strikes in the Crisis of 1917-1922," in Renate Bridenthal, ed., *Becoming Visible Women in European History*, (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1977), 210.

<sup>15</sup> Voltairine de Cleyre, *The Exquisite Rebel: The Essays of Voltairine de Cleyre: Feminist, Anarchist, Genius*, eds., Sharon Presley and Crispin Sartwell (Albany: State University of New York, 2005), 191.

argues, it was a fact that de Cleyre's feminism preceded her anarchism.<sup>16</sup> For Emma Goldman, however, her concerns for women were indivisible from her anarchism just as it was so for *Mujeres Libres*.

According to Alice Wexler, an Emma Goldman biographer, Goldman's anarcho-feminist stance stemmed from her giving a feminist dimension to anarchism and a libertarian dimension to the concept of women's emancipation. For Goldman, women's freedom of sexuality and reproduction were central to human's emancipation from conformity, obedience, and passivity.<sup>17</sup> Goldman said, "My quarrel with the feminists was that most of them saw their slavery apart from the rest of the human family." For Goldman, revolution and women's emancipation could not be torn apart. She would see that this same line of argument was also advocated by *Mujeres Libres* during the Spanish Civil War. Both saw that it was only in the anarchist revolutionary society without any state interference where authority would not be used against children, and marriage and the double standard of morality would not victimize women.

In order to yield these results, the anarchist revolution would need to be attended by women's labors. Helena Andrés Granel puts this essential ingredient of anarcho-feminism in her article on *Mujeres Libres*. She argues:

Anarcho-feminism proposed a double fight; against the capitalist and patriarchal system. In this line, it advocated the emancipation of working-class women from their double slaveries; class and gender. Thus, given that the emancipation of women for the triumph of the revolutionary cause was

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<sup>16</sup> Margaret S. Marsh, "The Anarchist-Feminist Response to the 'Woman Question' in Late Nineteenth-Century America," *American Quarterly* 30- 4 (Autumn, 1978): 533-547, 540.

<sup>17</sup> Alice Wexler, *Emma Goldman: An Intimate Life* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1984), 197-313. Also see Penny A. Weiss and Loretta Kensinger, eds., *Feminist Interpretations of Emma Goldman*, (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2007).

indispensable, women should have an essential role in the revolutionary fight.<sup>18</sup>

Women were encouraged to become active members of the revolutionary fight for themselves and for the society envisioned. Anarcho-feminists believed that women could overcome their problems through changing their ways as individuals. Their rationale may be summarized in the words of Emma Goldman who established an analogy between the emancipation of proletariat and emancipation of women as such, “Those who want to be free should take the first step.”<sup>19</sup>

Goldman’s anarcho-feminist stance is ignored in the current historiography. Secondary sources such as Richard Drinnon’s *Rebel in Paradise: A Biography of Emma Goldman* (1982), Candace Falk’s, the Project director of Emma Goldman Papers, *Love, Anarchy and Emma Goldman* (1984), Alice Wexler’s *Emma Goldman: An Intimate Life* (1984) and *Emma Goldman in Exile: From the Russian Revolution to the Spanish War* (1989), and Marian J. Morton’s *Emma Goldman and the American Left: Nowhere at Home* (1992) related Emma Goldman’s shifting adventures from America to her exiles in Russia and Europe. These works track her involvement as an anarchist.

However, researchers working on Spanish women in the Spanish Civil War context have been more likely to emphasize Emma Goldman’s anarcho-feminist stance in their works. This attitude seems to stem from the fact that *Mujeres Libres* set the example as an anarcho-feminist organization. *Mujeres Libres* is never

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<sup>18</sup> “El anarcofeminismo supondrá una crítica a ambas posturas proponiendo una doble lucha, contra el sistema capitalista y contra el sistema patriarcal. De este modo, propugnará la emancipación de las mujeres trabajadoras sobre las que se ciernen dos esclavitudes: de clase y de género. La mujer debe tener un papel esencial para el triunfo de la revolución dado que la emancipación femenina es condición esencial para el triunfo de la revolución.” In Helena Andrés Granel, “Mujeres Libres: emancipación femenina y revolución.” *Germinal* 2, (October, 2006): 43-57, 44-46.

<sup>19</sup> “los que quieran ser libres deben dar el primer paso.” Emma Goldman, “Situación social de la mujer,” which appeared in *Mujeres Libres* at the 21st week of the revolution. In Mary Nash, ed., “*Mujeres Libres*”: *España 1936-1939*, 129.



evaluated as feminist, as the co-founders of this organization clearly rejected being labeled as such. Furthermore, they revealed that they had never heard a movement in the name of feminism ever existed in the world.<sup>20</sup> Having no ideological thrust on which to base their claims as women, Mujeres Libres, set against the Spanish anarchist-affiliated background, initiated their own movement: anarcho-feminism.

As Helena Andrés Granel suggests, “Mujeres Libres was formed with the aim of education and the elevation of the cultural levels of women, which is essential for her emancipation inasmuch as for her digesting the revolution and incorporation into the anarcho-syndicalist fight.”<sup>21</sup> When the Popular Front government summoned them to its defense, they deemed their duty twofold; to provide women with the means for their personal, ethical, and economic liberation. In the case of Emma Goldman, however, as she was not set against the background of a mass anarchist movement in America, she merely remained a radical when it came to her concerns for women. Let alone anarcho-feminism, anarchism never really took hold on American soil. Even after the Haymarket Incident in 1886, there was not a well-established anarchist organization in America. The group with the greatest number of affiliates had only seven thousand members.<sup>22</sup> Thus, Emma Goldman acted independently to incorporate women’s concerns into the agenda of what small anarchist groups existed.

Emma Goldman was the pioneer of the American anarcho-feminist thought, but this fact in the absence of a mass anarchist movement in America was

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<sup>20</sup> Martha Ackelsberg, *Free Women of Spain: Anarchism and the Struggle for the Emancipation of Women*, (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1991), 95.

<sup>21</sup> “Mujeres Libres nace así con un objetivo de educación y elevación del nivel cultural de las mujeres, condición esencial para su emancipación así como para su toma de conciencia revolucionaria e incorporación a la lucha anarcosindicalista.” In Helena Andrés Granel, “Mujeres Libres: emancipación femenina y revolución social.” *Germinal* 2, (October, 2006): 43-57, 46.

<sup>22</sup> Charles A. Madison, “Anarchism in the United States,” *Journal of the History of Ideas* 6-1 (Jan., 1945): 46-66, 58.

overlooked in the historiography. Thus, she came to be known as feminist when it came to her concerns for women. It is only in the light of her solidarity with the Spanish anarcho-feminist organization Mujeres Libres that, as this thesis puts it, she will be redefined as an anarcho-feminist, and it was thanks to their cooperation in propaganda and fund-raising efforts that anarcho-feminism found its place on the international platform across England, Canada, and the USA.

The gap in the current historiography as to Emma Goldman's definition can be overcome by looking in detail into her own writings. Published primary sources this thesis will rely on are composed of her biography *Living My Life* (1931), which unfortunately does not cover her years in Spain; *Red Emma Speaks: Selected Writings and Speeches by Emma Goldman* (1972), edited by Alix Kates Shulman; *Anarchism and Other Essays* (1910) written by Goldman; and *Emma Goldman: A Documentary History of the American Years* (2003), edited by Candace Falk, covering all her articles and interviews that appeared in several anarchist periodicals between 1890 and 1909 in two volumes.

The writings of the co-founders of Mujeres Libres also provide a ground whereby the writings of Emma Goldman are seen to be comparable with theirs in rhetoric and vocabulary. These published primary sources are: Sara Berenguer's *Entre el sol y la tormenta: Revolución, guerra y exilio de una mujer* (2004); Federica Montseny's "La mujer, problema del hombre" (1926-1927) and her pamphlet *El problema de los sexos* (1943); the co-founder of Mujeres Libres Lucía Sánchez Saornil's (1895-1970) article "La 'Femme' dans la guerre et dans la révolution: Mujeres Libres 1936" which appeared in the anarchist periodical *CNT* number 531. These sources provide insight into the Spanish Civil War in which Spanish women came to redefine their roles within the anarchist milieu.

Secondary sources on Mujeres Libres are scarce: Martha Ackelsberg's *Free Women of Spain: Anarchism and the Struggle for the Emancipation of Women* (1991); Mary Nash's two works *Defying Male Civilization: Women in the Spanish Civil War* (1995) and "*Mujeres Libres*": *España 1936-1939*; and Liaño Conchita Gil's *Mujeres Libres* (1995) are the most complete volumes on this organization. These few sources can provide in-depth accounts based on primary materials; pamphlets, periodicals, reports published in the anarchist milieu relying heavily on the archives of the CNT (National Confederation of Labor), the mother organization of Mujeres Libres.

In secondary sources on Mujeres Libres, Emma Goldman is mentioned briefly, though her support and solidarity with the organization is acknowledged. The only book that deals with Emma Goldman's activities in Spain is *Vision On Fire: Emma Goldman on the Spanish Revolution* edited by David Porter, professor of Politics and a researcher of anarchism. This work examines Emma Goldman's role in the Spanish Civil War and her affiliations with Spanish anarchists spanning Goldman's visits from 1936 through 1938. In this work, one chapter entitled "The Role of Women in the Spanish Revolution" is devoted to Emma Goldman's view of Spanish women and Mujeres Libres. This chapter only covers her comments about the newly formed group as they appeared both in *Mujeres Libres* magazine and in her correspondence with her comrades on both sides of the Atlantic.

This thesis will predominantly rely on primary sources. The bulk of these comprise the correspondence between Emma Goldman and two of the co-founders of Mujeres Libres; Lucía Sánchez Saornil (1895-1970) and Mercedes Comaposada Guillén (1901-1994). Emma Goldman's one correspondence to Federica Montseny in 1932 is also used. Her correspondence with Mercedes Comaposada covers the

years 1936 and 1937; and that with Lucía Sánchez Saornil covers 1938 and 1939. Thus, these letters reveal all four years of Emma Goldman's involvement with the Spanish Civil War and *Mujeres Libres*. These pieces of correspondence are from documentary sources of the "Emma Goldman Papers Project" founded in 1980 at the University of Berkeley by the support of the two federal agencies, the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) and the National Historical Publications and Records Commission of the National Archives (NHPRC). In 1992, the project published a microfilm edition of more than twenty-two thousand letters, writings, government documents, newspaper clippings and reminiscences by and on Emma Goldman in seventy-nine microfilm reels.<sup>23</sup> Most of the letters from this microfilm collection used in this thesis are originally in the Spanish and French language in typed form. The author of this thesis translated these letters into English. Other translations from Spanish are the twelfth issue of *Mujeres Libres* magazine dating 1938 and Federica Montseny's "La mujer, problema del hombre" (1926-1927) which appeared in *La Revista Blanca* (The Blank Journal).

Not even one book, article or a scholarly work has been penned to study the relation between Emma Goldman and *Mujeres Libres* up to now. Only in one paragraph or two does Emma Goldman's name appear in works written on *Mujeres Libres*. As to the works about Emma Goldman, *Mujeres Libres* shows up still less. This thesis aims to fill this gap in the historiographies of anarcho-feminism, *Mujeres Libres* and Emma Goldman. Through this new study Emma Goldman can be discussed under new light as an anarcho-feminist pioneer who deserves this title through her efforts for *Mujeres Libres*. Only then can her earlier writings about women and activities in America be said to have had anarcho-feminist texture. In the

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<sup>23</sup> Oz Frankel, "Whatever Happened to 'Red Emma'? Emma Goldman, from Alien Rebel to American Icon," *The Journal of American History* 83-3 (Dec., 1996): 903-942, 904.

same vein, it was the Spanish refugee case that consolidated Goldman and Mujeres Libres' collaboration in propaganda and fund-raising work which in the end brought their anarcho-feminist solidarity into the international context.

The next four chapters of this thesis are each constructed chronologically. In the second chapter, the pre-1936 years of Emma Goldman will show her debut into the anarchist thought and milieu of women's concerns in America. Her involvement as an anarchist is interwoven with a panorama of the socio-political background set against the American Progressive Era. Besides the American years, Emma Goldman's initial reactions to the Spanish Revolution in the late 1920s is also discussed. In this chapter, readers will become acquainted with Goldman's methods for spreading her anarchist doctrines among people. The third chapter of the thesis will relate the year 1936 when Emma Goldman for the first time appealed to Spanish women through the magazine *Mujeres Libres*. In this chapter, readers will track the establishment of the long-lived solidarity between Emma Goldman and Mujeres Libres. Goldman set the road map of Mujeres Libres. They concurred to empower Spanish women to be self-sufficient for the anarchist society to be founded after the anti-fascist struggle and also for the sexual revolution.

The fourth chapter will dwell on the year 1937 when Goldman was selected by Mujeres Libres as the representative of the group's magazine *Mujeres Libres* in Europe and the USA. Thus, Goldman came to represent what the magazine covered in the 1937 issues about marriage, the education of mothers, free-love, birth control, voluntary motherhood, and the elimination of prostitution. Spanish anarcho-feminists adopted the same rhetoric on these issues three decades later than Goldman. This will show that Goldman guided the group concerning these issues. The reason why the year 1937 is chosen to deal with these specific topics is that under anarchist leader

Federica Montseny, who was Minister of Health and Social Assistance in 1936-1937, the legislation of abortion was passed and other related issues appeared on the 1937 agenda. This chapter will solidify the first international anarcho-feminist cooperation in the person of Emma Goldman who became the representative of the group's magazine and also the delegate of the newly formed National Federation of Mujeres Libres. She attended women's conferences in Europe to gather support for the group.

Chapter five looks at the years 1938-1939 and tracks Emma Goldman's presence in London before she departed for Canada to continue her activities there. As the official representative of the CNT at the London section of the SIA, she put a lot of energy into arranging exhibitions and film shows to raise money for the Spanish refugees. She sent clothing and food for them. She acted as an intermediary in refugee children's adoptions by anarchist couples. The year 1939, on the other hand, witnessed the co-founders of Mujeres Libres being exiled into France. However, as a sure sign of solidarity between the group and Emma Goldman, the latter was enthusiastic when she was solicited for help to arouse the consciousness of people to the calamity that befell on Spanish evacuees.

The chronological construction of the chapters permits more concentrated focus on the biographical sketches of both Emma Goldman and Mujeres Libres. The categorization of specific topics on the agenda span the evolvement of solidarity between Emma Goldman and Mujeres Libres in three years. Another advantage of the chronologically constructed work is that it enables readers to see that Emma Goldman's writings on such topics as marriage, education, and birth control besides her efforts of propaganda and fundraising in America date back to earlier than Mujeres Libres dealt with them. This goes to show that although the historiography has ignored it, Emma Goldman was the pioneer of the anarcho-feminist ideology.

## CHAPTER II

### THE MAKING of EMMA GOLDMAN, PRE-1936

*Nellie Bly [New York World journalist]: What is your future?*

*EG: I shall live to agitate to promote our ideals. I am willing to give my liberty and my life, if necessary, to further my cause. It is my mission and I shall not falter.<sup>24</sup>*

By 1936, Emma Goldman had lived in America, Soviet Russia, and Spain. This chapter will explore the methods and ways of Goldman in her attempt to establish a better society along the anarchist lines in these three countries. The aim of this chapter is to introduce readers to Goldman's methods which she also used in her involvement with Mujeres Libres in Spain. These methods were reinforcement of anarchist network through mutual aid, personal and collective empowerment, lecturing, fundraising, mass publishing, circulating birth-control information, nursing women, and collaborating in founding the Ferrer School to educate children in anarchist principles. Goldman would apply these same methods during her

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<sup>24</sup> Emma Goldman, "Nellie Bly Again," interview by Nellie Bly, *New York World*, Sep 17, 1893. In Candace Falk et al., *Emma Goldman: A Documentary History of the American Years, Made for America, (1890-1901)*, volume 1, (California: University of Berkeley Press, 2003), 160.

involvement with Mujeres Libres in Spain. The fact that she did not need to develop new methods in Spain, as she appealed to her earlier methods used in America to help Mujeres Libres, will show that she acted as a guide to Mujeres Libres.

Goldman was born in Kovno, Lithuania, part of Czarist Russia in 1869 into a Jewish family. Her parents, Abraham and Taube Goldman ran a government inn. Goldman had two older half-sisters and three younger brothers. Her father was the authoritarian figure of her early age, whom she recalled as “the nightmare of her childhood”. Goldman attended a Jewish elementary school for four years in Koenigsberg where her grandmother lived. She perfected her knowledge of German there. When she was thirteen, the Goldman family moved to the St. Petersburg ghetto. When she was fifteen, her father wanted to marry the young Emma off. However, she resisted such an idea; instead she wanted to pursue her studies. In 1885, with her sister she moved to America. They stayed with their elder sister in Rochester, New York. Goldman took up a job first as a corset maker then as a seamstress; she made overcoats for ten hours a day and was paid \$2.50 a week.<sup>25</sup>

In 1886, the Haymarket Incident became the catalysmic event in Goldman’s life. In this event, as the leading historian of American anarchism Paul Avrich relates in his detailed study *The Haymarket Tragedy*, on May 4, in Chicago, a group of anarchists gathered in the Haymarket Square to protest the police shootings of strikers at the McCormick Reaper Works the previous day. The police asked the crowd to disperse, then a bomb was thrown. The police then retaliated by opening

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<sup>25</sup> For Goldman’s life, see her autobiography *Living My Life* in two volumes. (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1970). For biographical sketches on her, see *Red Emma Speaks: An Emma Goldman Reader*, ed. Alix Kates Shulman, (New York: Humanity Books, 1998); *Anarchism and Other Writings* (CO: Frederick Ellis, 2005); Alice Wexler, *Emma Goldman: An Intimate Life* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1984); Alice Wexler, *Emma Goldman in Exile: From the Russian Revolution to the Spanish Civil War*, (Boston: Beacon Press, 1989), and Bonnie Dark Haaland, “Sexuality, Reproduction and Anarchy: Emma Goldman and the Impurity of the State” (PhD diss., University of Toronto, 1992).



fire on the crowd killing many people. Sixty-seven policemen were hurt; eight of whom later died. The bombthrower was never identified, but eight Chicago anarchists were convicted of murder. Four of them were later hanged.<sup>26</sup>

Goldman, already disappointed with her life in the factory, eeking out a living at a very low wage, was introduced to anarchism with the Haymarket Incident. As Avrich suggests, there were many of people in whom the Haymarket episode sowed the seeds of political awakening.<sup>27</sup> Among them was Emma Goldman, who explained the effects of it in her autobiography *Living My Life* (1931) in such words:

I read about their heroic stand [the Haymarket martyrs] while on trial and their defense. I saw a new world opening before me. A great ideal, a burning faith, a determination to dedicate myself to the memory of martyred comrades to make their cause my own, to make known to the world their beautiful lives and heroic deaths. In fact, the Chicago tragedy was the awakening of my social consciousness.<sup>28</sup> I was an Anarchist when I left Russia to come to America, but I had hardly formulated my belief. The final influence that crystallized my views was the hanging of the Chicago Anarchists in 1887.<sup>29</sup>

The bloody event came to be a convergent point where anarchism nationwide profligated and anarchists came to know one another. It also sparked international outcry that drew the attention of anarchists in Europe into America. This led to the reinforcement of ties between European anarchists and American anarchists. Other than that, through this watershed event, as Voltairine de Cleyre biographers Sharon

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<sup>26</sup> Paul Avrich, *The Haymarket Tragedy*, (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1980), 430-432. According to Avrich, the trial of the Chicago anarchists was held as one of the most-debated jurisprudential decisions of the American Supreme Court. The event had implicated foreign-born anarchists, a case which would be revamped in the case of Sacco-Vanzetti in the 1920s. The Haymarket Affair came to be ‘cause célèbre’ of American radicals. The incident came to embody the anarchist cause more precisely than in any other form. After the incident, employers of large corporations started to break up labor organizations. They had recourse to Pinkertons [secret guards to break strikes], lockouts, blacklists and anti-union oaths. “Law and Order Leagues” were formed, and police force was strengthened on a national scale.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, 434.

<sup>28</sup> Emma Goldman, *Living My Life*, volume 1, (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1970), 9-10.

<sup>29</sup> Interview with Emma Goldman, “Talk with Emma Goldman,” *New York Sun*, Jan 6, 1901. In Candace Falk et al., *Emma Goldman: A Documentary History of the American Years, Making Speech Free, (1902-1909)*, volume 2, (California: University of Berkeley Press, 2003), 423.

Presley and Crispin Sartwell argue in their work, both de Cleyre and Goldman, already sharing the horrors of the Gilded Age, were transformed from vague socialists into anarchists after the Haymarket execution.<sup>30</sup>

One year after the Haymarket Incident in 1887 at the age of 18, Goldman married Jacob Kersner, a Jewish factory worker. She attained US citizenship by virtue of this marriage. However within the same year the couple were divorced on the grounds that they were “opposite poles” and had no “sexual blending”.<sup>31</sup> In 1889, Goldman moved to New York City at the age of twenty. She took residence in a commune with other Russian-born anarchists.

Goldman wrote in an article that the American anarchist movement was in its infancy at the turn of the century.<sup>32</sup> But, it would stay in that state in the years to come. It was only in this late 19th century that America witnessed a sharp rise in the number of anarchists. The reason for this, aside from the Bolshevik influence from Soviet Russia, most probably was the economic depressions of the 1890s which increased unemployment and poverty. The Wall Street Panic of May 7, 1893 had worsened the crisis when thousands of businesses failed. Three million people were estimated to be unemployed.<sup>33</sup> In Chicago alone, unemployment left 200,000 people without work.<sup>34</sup> Anarchism attracted mainly German-speaking people. In the fall of 1883, there were 2000 anarchists, and by the fall of 1885 this number reached 5000. The centers of the movement were such industrial cities as New York, Philadelphia,

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<sup>30</sup> Voltairine de Cleyre, *The Exquisite Rebel: The Essays of Voltairine de Cleyre: Anarchist, Feminist, Genius*, eds., Sharon Presley and Crispin Sartwell (Albany: The State University of New York Press, 2005), 5.

<sup>31</sup> Goldman, *Living My Life*, 10.

<sup>32</sup> Emma Goldman, “The Propaganda and the Congress,” *Free Society*, Sep 8, 1900. In Falk et al., *Emma Goldman*, volume 2, 392.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, 151.

<sup>34</sup> Howard Zinn, *A People’s History of the United States: 1492-Present*, (New York: Harper Perennial, 2005), 278.

Chicago, and St. Louis all with large working-class and immigrant populations. Ethnically speaking, anarchists were predominantly German Jews. There were also Czechs, Scandinavians and Britons. According to Avrich, anarchism for these people was not a protest to industrialism but rather it would help humanize the factory conditions and serve public needs. They hoped for better working conditions, voluntary cooperation of free individuals and a society without an authoritarian government.<sup>35</sup>

It was in these circumstances that Goldman made her debut into the anarchist milieu. She could easily keep in touch with German anarchists, since German was her native language besides Russian.<sup>36</sup> It was in the New York commune that she was introduced to Alexander Berkman (1870-1936) her life-long intimate lover-comrade.<sup>37</sup> In the anarchist circles of New York, she also became acquainted with Johann Most (1846-1906), editor of *Freiheit*, an anarchist paper in German. Goldman learned much about anarchism and political activism from Johann Most. Then she embarked on lecturing several cities such as Rochester, Buffalo and Cleveland. In the meantime, she became the leading organizer of women in the cloak-maker's strike.

In 1892 Alexander Berkman was sentenced to fourteen years in prison for his attempted assassination on Henry Clay Frick, the chairman of the Carnegie Steel Company. Frick had set on an army of Pinkertons [strike-breakers] on steelworkers

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<sup>35</sup> Avrich, 83-89.

<sup>36</sup> Emma Goldman, "Nellie Bly Again," interview by Nellie Bly, *New York World*, Sep 17, 1893. "Miss Goldman spoke Russian, German, French and English; she read and wrote Spanish and Italian." In Falk et al., *Emma Goldman*, volume 1, 158.

<sup>37</sup> Alexander (Ovsej) Berkman (1870-1936), known as Sasha, was a Lithuanian anarchist who at the age of 17 emigrated to the USA. He was the organizer of the 'Pioneers of Liberty' group of New York. It was a Jewish anarchist group founded in Oct 9, 1886, the day the sentences of the Haymarket anarchists were announced. For a more detailed study on Berkman's life, see his autobiography *Prison Memoirs of An Anarchist*, (New York: Schocken Books, 1970). His writings are covered in *Life of An Anarchist: The Alexander Berkman Reader*, (New York: Seven Stories Press, 2004).

during the Homestead Strike. The clash ended with death of three Pinkertons and seven workers. Berkman in his plan to assassinate Frick had assigned Goldman the task to raise money for the gun. She could not find the necessary sum in her first attempt. Then she tried selling herself, but finally acquired the money from a friend. Goldman's co-conspiracy with Berkman was not discovered in the end, but Berkman was imprisoned seven years.<sup>38</sup> In this showcase of her bold and devoted action, the first instance of Goldman's raising money for a particular cause besides her daring to help her friend foreshadows her later experiences in the propaganda and fund-raising work in America and Spain.

Berkman's imprisonment for seven years left Goldman devoid of her closest comrade. However, she did not hold back from giving speeches and organizing meetings. But it was not long before she was imprisoned as well. In 1893, Goldman was accused of inciting the unemployed in New York to riot. She urged their children who needed food to go into the stores and take it.<sup>39</sup> She was sentenced to one-year imprisonment on Blackwell's Island. Here she took interest in nursing her female inmates. Out of prison, she penned her experiences in an anarchist periodical. She reported that she had not idled away behind the bars but offered her services to her inmates: "My [im]prisonment is over now, and I do not regret it. It has been a school of experience for me and my time was not altogether lost. For it was my privilege to make the lives of some of the poor, helpless ones more endurable."<sup>40</sup> She would repeat same kinds of acts all through her life.

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<sup>38</sup> Alix Kates Shulman, ed., in biographical introduction to *Red Emma Speaks: An Emma Goldman Reader*, (New York: Humanity Books, 1998), 28.

<sup>39</sup> Zinn, 278.

<sup>40</sup> Emma Goldman, "My Year in Stripes," *New York World*, Aug 18, 1894. In Falk et al., *Emma Goldman*, volume 1, 200.

When she was out of prison she went to Vienna in 1895 to further her skills as a nurse. She received training in nursery and midwifery which would help her offer her services to working-class women in America and Spain. In the meantime, as Alix Kates Shulman argues in her biographical sketch of Goldman, she attended secret anarchist meetings in Paris where she started to build an international fame in anarchist circles. Celebrated European anarchists such as Peter Kropotkin, Errico Malatesta and the veteran of the Paris Commune Louis Michel all met her for the first time and came to admire her.<sup>41</sup> Besides making acquaintances with influential anarchists, as Bonnie Dark Haaland argues in her dissertation, Goldman was exposed to the radical ideas of the European sexologists during her stay in Europe. She attended Sigmund Freud's lectures in Vienna in 1896. By that time, the British sexologist, Edward Carpenter had authored *Love's Coming of Age* (1896) and Havelock Ellis, another famous British sexologist, had authored *Studies in the Psychology of Sex* (1897).<sup>42</sup> These two were the groundbreaking works in their fields. Given that Goldman was a bibliophile, who spent all her accrued money on books since her early years at factory,<sup>43</sup> she readily familiarized herself with these authors. Goldman referred to Edward Carpenter in her essay "Marriage and Love", and she referred to Havelock Ellis in her essay "The Traffic in Women". On her return to New York in 1901, as Haaland continues, "poor women pleaded with Goldman to end their pregnancies and to provide them with reliable birth-control methods."<sup>44</sup> Most of the time she helped them.

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<sup>41</sup> Shulman, 28.

<sup>42</sup> Bonnie Dark Haaland, "Sexuality, Reproduction and Anarchy: Emma Goldman and the Impurity of the State" (PhD diss., University of Toronto, 1992), 268. It should be noted that Havelock Ellis would be one of the sponsors of the SIA (International Anti-Fascist Organization) three decades later.

<sup>43</sup> Emma Goldman, "Nellie Bly Again," interview by Nellie Bly, *New York World*, Sep 17, 1893. In Falk et al., *Emma Goldman*, volume 1, 158.

<sup>44</sup> Haaland, 268.

In 1898 when the Spanish-American War exploded, Goldman made speeches criticizing the imperial aim of the US government. She travelled across the country to help the revolutionary Cubans and got in touch with her Latin comrades to collect funds.<sup>45</sup> By this time Goldman, as a lecturer, had been highly influential on young anarchists. In 1901 President William McKinley was assassinated by Leon Czolgosz, an anarchist. Czolgosz confessed to having been inspired by Goldman in his act. Czolgosz was electrocuted and Goldman was arrested for being an accomplice. Goldman did not denounce Czolgosz's act, as in her view, he seemed to act out of self-defense as one of the millions of the exploited workers.<sup>46</sup> As seen, even in jail she did not hold back from being outspoken. At one point, she made the headlines when she proposed to nurse McKinley at his death-bed.<sup>47</sup>

In 1906 Goldman started to publish the monthly periodical *Mother Earth*. In this periodical articles on anarchism, sexuality and reviews of literature were published. As Candace Falk, the editor of The EG Papers Project, suggests: "The name 'mother earth' rooted in Goldman's desire to ground her readers in the real conditions of the world. The magazine was also a base for fundraising for strikers and other militant groups in need of legal aid."<sup>48</sup> Besides *Mother Earth*, other anarchist periodicals had long been promoting funds for anarchists. When some of them such as *Solidarity* and *Free Society* could no longer be published due to economic problems, Goldman had travelled from Philadelphia to California to raise

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<sup>45</sup> David Porter, ed., introduction to *Vision On Fire: Emma Goldman on the Spanish Revolution*, (California: AK Press, 2006), 27.

<sup>46</sup> Falk et al., *Emma Goldman*, volume 2, 13.

<sup>47</sup> Shulman, 28.

<sup>48</sup> Falk et al., *Emma Goldman*, volume 2, 41.

money.<sup>49</sup> She would later encourage the publication of the magazine *Mujeres Libres* in 1936.

In 1910 Goldman published her first volume of essays in *Anarchism and Other Essays*. This work contains Goldman's views of anarchism, marriage, prostitution, education and Puritanism.<sup>50</sup> By this time Goldman was widely known all across America. As Candace Falk asserts, "The most gratifying aspect of her untiring efforts were the tremendous sale of Anarchist literature, whose propagandistic effect cannot be estimated. As to her lecture tours each tour extended over new territory, including localities where Anarchism had never before received a hearing."<sup>51</sup> To corroborate this argument, as Goldman noted, in 1910 she spoke 120 times in 37 cities in 25 states to 25,000 listeners.<sup>52</sup> She saw herself as one of the two professional women speakers of America along with Voltairine de Cleyre, American anarchist. Goldman said that her main tool in the propaganda work was her speaking good English. At that time most of other female anarchists spoke in Yiddish, including Goldman's newly arrived mother who was doing Jewish philanthropy work.<sup>53</sup> Another reason why Goldman deemed lectures in English important was that to address the native Americans in their own language would help further their anarchist principles.<sup>54</sup>

Oz Frankel, the author of the article "Whatever Happened to 'Red Emma'", points out the distinctive character of Goldman's lectures:

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<sup>49</sup> Emma Goldman, "The Law's Limit," Oct 17, 1893. In Falk et al., *Emma Goldman*, volume 1, 175.

<sup>50</sup> Emma Goldman, "The Hypocrisy of Puritanism," in Shulman, 153-154. Goldman denounced Puritanism: "Puritanism, with its perversion of the significance and functions of the human body especially in regard to woman, has condemned her to celibacy, or to the indiscriminate breeding of a diseased race, or to prostitution." In this writing she also refers to the British sexologist Havelock Ellis's work *The Psychology of Sex* (London: William Heinemann, 1933).

<sup>51</sup> Falk et al., *Emma Goldman*, volume 1, 37.

<sup>52</sup> Shulman, 30.

<sup>53</sup> Interview with Emma Goldman, "Talk with Emma Goldman," *New York Sun*, Jan 6, 1901. In Falk et al., *Emma Goldman*, volume 1, 428-429.

<sup>54</sup> Emma Goldman, "Letters from a Tour," *Sturmuogel*, Feb 15, 1893-Dec 15, 1897. *Ibid.*, 318.

Goldman's main strength was her wizardry on the stump, fusing rhetoric with a spectacular delivery marked by a theatrical presentation and full control of voice modulation.... These emotionalism, hysteria, and instinctivism testified to the emergence of a new discourse in American life.<sup>55</sup>

Aside from her feverish tone of speaking, what is noteworthy about Goldman's oratorical skills is that she had mastered the English language so well that she could lecture to thousands of people without any difficulty. In fact, learning a language used to be one of Goldman's tools to further her anarchist causes. In America, she appealed to many people through her rapidly acquired English. In the years to come, in Spain, she would learn Spanish so that she could benefit to the anarchist circles. Also, she would reinforce her anarcho-feminist solidarity with *Mujeres Libres* through her working knowledge of Spanish in their correspondence.

Goldman's good grounding in English actually came from her passion for reading and learning. During her years in America, she had devoured a number of classical works by the small sum of money she earned as a seamstress. Indeed, Goldman believed in education thoroughly. She maintained, "Education is the greatest promoter of anarchism."<sup>56</sup> In the anarchist line of thinking, the role of the State on the education of children was supposed to be dispensed with, as the State education made them obedient citizens. Children inculcated with anarchist tenets, however, would make free and self-sufficient generations. In order to realize this aim in America, Emma Goldman, Alexander Berkman, Florence Kelley, and several others in 1911 opened up the Ferrer School in New York along the same lines with *Escuela Moderna* [Modern School] of Francisco Ferrer (1859-1909) the Spanish

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<sup>55</sup> Oz Frankel, "Whatever Happened to 'Red Emma'?" Emma Goldman, from Alien Rebel to American Icon," *The Journal of American History* 83-3 (Dec., 1996): 903-942, 908.

<sup>56</sup> Emma Goldman, "An Interrupted Interview," *Detroit Evening Star*, March 14, 1894. In Falk et al., *Emma Goldman*, volume 2, 359.



libertarian educator.<sup>57</sup> At the Ferrer school “Learning was seen as a positive creative activity only if self-chosen”<sup>58</sup>; As Joseph McCabe notes, the translator of Ferrer’s work *The Origin and Ideals of the Modern School*, Ferrer’s school was rationalistic; science and reason were the most cherished concepts; co-education was practiced. All students irrespective of background or sex studied a scientific curriculum that covered sex education, manual work, and the arts. There were also libraries and community centers for adolescents at the Ferrer schools. Besides intellectual training, children here were shown how to be hygienic; they would frequently undergo medical inspection.<sup>59</sup> Within three or four decades The Ferrer Schools extended in many states of America from New York to California as part of free school experiments.

Emma Goldman and Francisco Ferrer met for the first time in the Neo-Malthusian Congress of 1900. In 1909, Ferrer’s death led to international outcry. Goldman and her friends participated in protests over his murder at the hands of the Spanish government. After his death Goldman penned an essay titled “Francisco Ferrer and the Modern School” in her work *Anarchism and Other Essays* (1910), and her anarchist comrade Voltairine de Cleyre translated *The Origin and Ideals of the Modern School* into English.

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<sup>57</sup> Martha Ackelsberg, *Free Women of Spain: Anarchism and the Struggle for the Emancipation of Women*, (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1991), 58-59. Ackelsberg writes: “Francisco Ferrer Guardia spent sixteen years in exile in Paris after his attempted assassination on Alfonso XIII. In Paris he came in contact with the educational ideas of Paul Robin, Tolstoy, and Jean Grave. He returned to Spain in 1901 to found the *Escuela Moderna* in Barcelona. His goal was to form a school of emancipation, which will be concerned with banning from the mind whatever divides men, the false concepts of property, country, and family, so as to attain the liberty and well-being which all desire and none completely realizes. Ferrer was arrested in September 1909 by the Spanish government as asked by the Catholic Church; after a trial he was put into Montjuich prison and shot dead.” For further information about Modern School experiences in America, see Paul Avrich, *The Modern School Movement: Anarchism and Education in the USA*, (CA: AK Press, 2006).

<sup>58</sup> Porter, 37.

<sup>59</sup> Francisco Ferrer, *The Origin and Ideals of the Modern School*, trans., Joseph McCabe (New York: Factory School, 2000), 9-10.

In the matter of education, besides such school experiments as the Ferrer School, according to the newly emerging “New Woman” ideal of the Greenwich Village Feminists, the care of children was to be left to cooperative nurseries, as child-rearing necessitated special knowledge and skill.<sup>60</sup> However, according to anarchists, for practical reasons the role of mother on the education and care of children carried equally crucial importance. However, mothers both working and nursing their children had a challenging task to deal with. If the number of children they had increased, the less time they had for themselves and the work from which they gained their economic independence. Goldman knew this from her own female friends’ experiences. They were needed to serve the anarchist cause while at the same time they had to care for their children. In one of such dire situations, Goldman wrote to Lilian Wald, one of the Settlement House women, to care for the two daughters of her friend Lydia Landow.<sup>61</sup>

From 1910s onward, Emma Goldman addressed these concerns of women more frequently. The 1910s proved more conducive than earlier years for her to mention her radical views about birth control, as the race-suicide debate, which as of 1905 prompted upper-classes to reproduce more, had subsided by 1910.<sup>62</sup> In addition, American anarchism had reached enough maturity to discuss sexual matters. This is evidenced from an experience of Goldman. In 1900 she had criticized the International Anarchist Congress in Paris, for she was not permitted to deliver a speech on sexuality.<sup>63</sup> However, she could address these matters freely, as

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<sup>60</sup> June Sochen, *The New Woman: Feminism in Greenwich Village, 1910-1920*, (New York: Quadrangle Books, 1972), 10-29.

<sup>61</sup> Emma Goldman, “To Lilian Wald,” July 2, 1904. In Falk et al., *Emma Goldman*, volume 1, 141.

<sup>62</sup> Linda Gordon, *Woman’s Body, Woman’s Right: A Social History of Birth Control in America*, (Middlesex: Penguin Books, 1990), 137.

<sup>63</sup> Shulman, 9.

ten years later the anarchist circles could no longer ignore the problems of working-class women.<sup>64</sup>

In the overpopulated industrial cities of America the only practical way to unburden women from exhausting child care and to devoid the capitalist class of cheap labor force was to implement birth control. As Linda Gordon, the historian of the American birth-control movement, suggests, the birth control movement of the 1910s not only represented woman's taking the authority to themselves, but a revolutionizing of the society and the "empowering" of the working class. Birth-control advocates of this era considered men besides women as harmed by women's subjection to repeated pregnancies. They pointed to the weakening of the whole working class by overlarge families. They asserted that birth control would strengthen the democratic texture of the whole society.<sup>65</sup>

As Candace Falk, the editor of The EG Papers Project, suggests, "Emma Goldman employed her oratorical powers to stir audiences and awaken them to the perils of capitalism and the violence of power."<sup>66</sup> In the case of working-class women she used her oratorical powers to relieve women of problems related to their sex. Overlarge families were believed to serve to the purposes of capitalist class

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<sup>64</sup> William O'Neill, *Feminism in America: A History*, (New Jersey: Transaction Publishers, 1994), 149-166. As O'Neill notes, in the 1910s the greatest working-class women's strikes cropped up due to unfavorable working conditions. To cite a few: The Triangle Shirtwaist Company Strike in 1910 lasted more than eighteen months. 20,000 workers gathered in New York to protest the fire at the factory that killed 146 people, mostly women. In another instance, 40,000 people attended the Chicago Garment Strike to oppose wage cuts. Yet another case was the Lawrence Strike in 1912 led by IWW (International Workers of the World) against the wage cuts. Against all odds, however, by 1900 nearly half of the important American women's organizations had been established; by 1912 nine states had adopted woman suffrage; in 1913 Illinois granted the right to vote for the president. But, despite such gains the conditions of working-class women failed to get better. Between 1912 and 1917 twelve states provided laws setting minimum hours of work for women, but in practice the laws were not implemented. Safety and health of women workers were risked as exemplified in the case of fire at the Triangle Shirtwaist Company.

<sup>65</sup> Gordon, 9-170.

<sup>66</sup> Falk et al., *Emma Goldman*, volume 1, 43.

according to Neo-Malthusianism with which anarchism had affiliated itself. Thus, Goldman, already acquainted with Neo-Malthusian thought from her days in Europe as a nurse trainee, helped many working-class women reach birth-control information. She took the initiative in this job, as she saw that suffragist women's organizations did not care for the concerns of working-class women. She saw that the Socialist party also failed them. As William O'Neill, historian of American feminism notes, "This party was as a whole chauvinistic and out of tune with feminist values."<sup>67</sup>

The reason why suffragist feminists and socialists did not show much concern for working women's problems is that they did not want to challenge the State. However, in the anarchist way of thinking, as long as webs of communes and collectives were present for mutual aid, the State would be obsolete. And for Emma Goldman, the first to intermingle women's concerns with anarchist tenets, when the patriarchal and capitalist State was gone, women themselves could handle everything that concerned them. Goldman would employ the same rationale when she involved herself with Spanish women. She would help *Mujeres Libres* to provide the means for Spanish women to be self-sufficient both during the wartime and in the new society to be built after the revolutionary struggle.

Next to Margaret Sanger, Emma Goldman was the leading figure of the birth-control campaign of 1915 and 1916. However, there is a disagreement among scholars whether Sanger or Goldman should be given credit for originating the movement. As Paul Avrich asserts "As the two had close ties with one another, Margaret Sanger became an anarchist under the influence of Emma Goldman who

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<sup>67</sup> O'Neill, foreword.

became a major source for Sanger's ideals on "family limitation" as she called it."<sup>68</sup>

Also, Linda Gordon, historian of the birth-control movement in America suggests:

The most notorious for her outspokenness on sexual questions was Emma Goldman. Goldman, more than any other person, fused into a single ideology the many currents that mingled in American sex radicalism... In 1900 she had attended the secret conference of Neo-Malthusians in Paris and had even smuggled some contraceptive devices into the USA. In New York Goldman was tremendously influential on other women radicals, as a role model and a practitioner of the new morality. One woman strongly influenced by Goldman was Margaret Sanger.<sup>69</sup>

In truth, the spread of the birth-control movement can be said to be provided by Goldman thanks to her propaganda efforts in this job as well. She distributed pamphlets into poor neighborhoods with titles such as "Why and How the Poor Should Have Not Have Many Children". At one point, Sanger's pamphlet *The Woman Rebel* had been banned on the grounds that it contained obscene information. In the face of this, Goldman wrote to Sanger that she would publicize the magazine as best as she could. She sold copies in every city of her tour, and also arranged for distributor agents to circulate it.<sup>70</sup> In several cities, women had been introduced by Goldman to Sanger's pamphlet.<sup>71</sup> However, this activity of her did not go unpunished. In 1916 she spent fifteen days in jail for violating the Comstock Law of 1873 which banned sending any obscene information through mail.

Emma Goldman's efforts for birth control derived its energy from her stance against capitalist classes. One year later, on the same ground, she would denounce the preparedness of the US for World War I. When the United States declared war on Germany, the government imposed a draft. To oppose the draft, Goldman along with

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<sup>68</sup> Avrich, *Anarchist Voices*, 269.

<sup>69</sup> Linda Gordon, "Birth Control and Social Revolution," in Kathy Peiss, ed., *Major Problems in the History of American Sexuality*, (Massachusetts: Houghton Mifflin Company, 2002), 322.

<sup>70</sup> Candace Falk, *Love, Anarchy, and Emma Goldman*, (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1999), 132.

<sup>71</sup> Linda Gordon, "Birth Control and Social Revolution," 324.

Berkman founded the “No-Conscription League” in 1917. They also organized anti-war meetings. Goldman addressed her concern over the war to American people in her essay “Preparedness: The Road to Universal Slaughter” as such: “In the face of this approaching disaster, it behooves men and women not yet overcome by the war madness to raise their voice of protest, to call the attention of the people to the crime and outrage which are about to be perpetrated upon them.”<sup>72</sup> Goldman and Berkman were arrested and fined for \$10,000 for committing “conspiracy to obstruct the draft”, and they were imprisoned for two years. Now, their names were anathema to the American government. In 1919 under the Alien Exclusion Act they were deported to Soviet Russia along with 248 others. Goldman was now fifty years old leaving American soil she had set foot for the first time when she was sixteen. In the course of more than three decades, America had not let her realize her ideal anarchist society. The American government annuled her citizenship, raided her lectures, arrested her several times, and finally deported her. However, while she was aboarding the “Red Ark” in the New York port, her final words to America, where she had led thirty-four years of tempestuous life, still echoed her bold humor. She said, “I consider it an honor to be the first political agitator to be deported from the United States.”<sup>73</sup>

Goldman and Berkman had envisioned the Soviet Russia of the Bolsheviks as the ideal place where they would now live and act freely along the anarchist lines. However, like America, Vladimir Lenin’s Soviet Russia also disappointed them. Goldman’s public speeches were banned; bureaucracy and privilege in the party ranks disturbed them. The final stroke came when the government suppressed the

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<sup>72</sup> Emma Goldman, “Preparedness: The Road to Universal Slaughter,” in Shulman, 31.

<sup>73</sup> Shulman, 31. “The Alien Exclusion Act” initiated by Attorney General A.M. Palmer stipulated that an alien be deported if found to be anarchist or communist at any time after entering the US.

anarchist workers of Kronstadt in March 1921. In December 1921, Berkman left Soviet Russia for France and Goldman for England. Two years later, to make her bitter experience in Russia heard by everybody, Goldman penned two books respectively; *My Disillusionment in Russia* (1923) and *My Further Disillusionment in Russia* (1924). These two books were well-received in the anarchist milieu of America. Especially her pamphlet “The Crushing of the Russian Revolution” served as an exposé that revealed the sullen face of Bolshevism. Juan Anido, a Mexican-American anarchist, for instance, recalled his rupture with Bolshevik thought through this new pamphlet. He revealed: “We were all sympathetic to the Russian Revolution at first. We even planned to save money, buy tools, and go to Russia to work for the revolution. But when Emma Goldman’s pamphlet came, telling of the crushing of the revolution, that was the end of it.”<sup>74</sup> As seen, inasmuch as her lectures, Goldman’s writings also conveyed the undertones of propaganda work. Over the years, she had written in *Mother Earth*, she had penned many essays on political issues; she had penned books to awaken people to the social realities.

Up to now this chapter has shown that once Emma Goldman was committed to a cause, no ridicule, criticism, or repeated imprisonments could shake her passion and convictions. Her most powerful tools were mass publishing to reach people in every corner, her lecture tours all across America, and fundraising. Her birth-control and anti-conscription campaigns, her collaboration in founding the Ferrer School in New York were all realized thanks to her use of these means through propaganda work, mutual aid, and a boundless trust in herself and her comrades. As the later chapters will show, she would employ these same methods in her involvement with the Spanish anarcho-feminist organization *Mujeres Libres*.

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<sup>74</sup> Avrich, *Anarchist Voices*, 212.

After leaving Soviet Russia, Goldman settled in Germany for some time. Here she spoke out against the menace of Nazism. In 1931 she published her autobiography *Living My Life* with the financial assistance of her friends. In 1934 again with the help of her anarchist friends she could enter the USA to attend a three-month's lecture tour. On her return to Europe she settled with Berkman in southern France. However, Berkman was ill with cancer, and on June 24, 1936, he committed suicide. Three weeks later, the Spanish Civil War erupted. Now sixty-seven, Goldman, once summoned to aid the revolutionary cause in Spain, overcame "the crushing weight that was pressing down on her since Sasha's [Berkman's] death"<sup>75</sup> to see this time her ideal revolutionary society come true in Spain.

With the death of Berkman the couple's long-lived intimacy and camaraderie ended. For so many years it had embodied mutual aid, free love [they sustained their relationship while Goldman was still married to Jacob Kerschner], and solidarity without gender bias in anarchism. Goldman always underscored the importance of sharing responsibilities between men and women, and her own life involving many lover-comrade relations set the example for this. As Goldman believed, "feminine mind needs rubbing against masculine mind in a relationship of serious study and mutual respect."<sup>76</sup> She practiced what she said; she looked up to Berkman as if he had been her other half. The two fought against injustices together; they made a strong couple to realize their ideal revolutionary society.

In another relationship, Goldman made her lover Dr. Ben L. Reitman the manager of her lecture tours. Reitman also offered her his "Hobo Hall" for her lectures. In her first marriage Goldman had gained US citizenship and in her second

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<sup>75</sup> Shulman, 35.

<sup>76</sup> Falk et al., *Emma Goldman*, volume 2, 69-70.



marriage to a British fellow while she settled in Europe, she gained British citizenship. Mutual aid, as seen, almost always existed in Goldman's close ties with people regardless of gender bias. In this regard, she would also approve Mujeres Libres' stand along with their male counterparts in the anti-fascist struggle in Spain. When Berkman died, she had long been isolated from her friends in America. As to her anarchist friends in Europe, they had already gravitated towards the anti-fascist struggle in Spain. The new destination for Goldman to re-live the cooperation and mutual aid, and to be part of the revolutionary struggle, was now Spain.

Goldman had already made acquaintances of many German anarchists who had close ties with their Spanish counterparts. Goldman had met anarchists like Max Nettlau, Rudolf Rocker, and Helmut Rüdiger at the Red Trade Union International Congresses of 1920 and 1921. All of them had also regularly frequented Anarchist Congresses held in Europe. Goldman's first visit to Spain was from December 1928 through January 1929 for three weeks. She visited the anarchist family of Federico Urales, Soledad Gustavo and their daughter Federica Montseny (1905-1994), who would be the Minister of Health and Social Assistance in 1936 under the Republican government. This visit of her was short, thus it did not allow her to observe the situation in Spain in detail. However, while she had been in America she had become familiar with the resilience of Spanish anarchists for their cause.

As David Porter notes in his preliminary pages to *Vision On Fire: Emma Goldman on the Spanish Revolution*, "Political developments in Spain gained frequent coverage in the North American movement press. In addition, both severe impoverishment and governmental repression caused significant Spanish emigration

to the Americas well into the twentieth century.”<sup>77</sup> Thus, a growing Spanish émigré community of comrades in northeastern United States had given Goldman and other activists a direct sense of communication with Spain by this time. Spanish anarchist Pedro Esteve was the one among Spanish anarchists who had the closest ties with Goldman. Many times she tried to aid him when he was looked for by the police. Esteve, like Goldman, was a propagandist; he also acted as a labor organizer in Florida and New York.<sup>78</sup> Of equal significance, as a nurse and midwife on the East side of New York City, Goldman became acquainted with numerous Spanish immigrant families on a personal basis as well.”<sup>79</sup> These initial acquaintances of Goldman with the Spanish people would let her quickly diagnose the condition of Spanish women during the Civil War.

To give the number of Spanish anarchists in America, during the 1920s and 1930s, at the peak of the movement there were nearly 2,500 active Spanish anarchists and 2,000 sympathizers.<sup>80</sup> Besides, during the Spanish Civil War, American socialists and communists’ sympathy with the Spanish cause was boosted.<sup>81</sup> In the meantime, on the other side of the Atlantic, recent developments of the American anarchism were not unknown to the Spanish people. As Robert W. Kern, historian of the Spanish anarchism, gives an example, Goldman’s comrade, anarchist historian

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<sup>77</sup> Porter, 26.

<sup>78</sup> Falk et al., *Emma Goldman*, volume 2, 208.

<sup>79</sup> Porter, 26.

<sup>80</sup> Avrich, *Anarchist Voices*, 212.

<sup>81</sup> Cary Nelson, *The Wound and the Dream*, (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2002), 4. As Nelson notes, 40,000 volunteers who came to be known as the International Brigades ran to the defense of the Spanish Republic.; Peter N. Carroll, *Abraham Lincoln Brigade: Americans in the Spanish Civil War*, (CA: Stanford University Press, 1994), 13-61. As Carroll reports, 2800 Americans from the blue-collar ranks of workers, seamen, drivers and mechanics were affiliated with the Communist Party which had reached 62,000 members by 1937 due to the Depression. They named themselves Abraham Lincoln Brigade and arrived in Spain in 1937 as the fifteenth part of the International Brigade. They served as doctors, nurses, technicians, and drivers. In violation of President Franklin Delano Roosevelt’s embargo to supply assistance to the both sides in Spain, American Medical Bureau to Aid Spanish Democracy and the North American Committee To Aid Spanish Democracy raised funds for supply and medical aid to the Spanish people.

“Max Nettlau sketched a history of North American anarchism before and after the World War I in *La Revista Blanca*”<sup>82</sup> edited by the Montseny family. Another example provided by Paul Avrich reveals that in 1937 at the 50th anniversary of the Haymarket Incident celebrated in New York, a delegation of the CNT (National Confederation of Labor) attended the commemoration ceremony along with other international representatives.<sup>83</sup>

Emma Goldman’s first public reaction related to Spain dates back to 1896 when she protested the tortures suffered by hundreds of anarchists in the Montjuich prison at the hands of the Spanish government. This event had sparked international outcry. The second instance in which Goldman showed her concern for the Spanish events was in the “Tragic Week” of Barcelona in 1909, during which the liberal educator Francisco Ferrer was arrested. This event was again a showcase of government repression of anarchists. In the face of this, Goldman, as was her style, reacted to this bloody event by her pen and voicing her grievance publicly. By 1936, she was also interested in the condition of Spanish women and children. In her correspondence with Federica Montseny in 1932, she wrote: “I am planning to make a voyage to Spain. I want to see the changes concerning the condition of women and education of children brought about by the revolution.”<sup>84</sup> Goldman, during her visit to Spain in 1928, had observed Spanish women and children. She had seen their desperate condition under the dictatorship of Miguel Primo de Rivera. However, in 1932, the reformist Second Republic was in government. Under it, anarcho-sydicalist

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<sup>82</sup> Robert W. Kern, *Red Years-Black Years: A Political History of Spanish Anarchism 1911-1937*, (Pennsylvania: ISHI, 1978), 26.

<sup>83</sup> Avrich, *The Haymarket Tragedy*, 453.

<sup>84</sup> “Depuis quelque temps je pense faire un voyage en Espagne. Je voudrais bien me rendre compte des changements faits par la révolution en ce qui concerne la condition de la femme et l’éducation des enfants.” Emma Goldman to Federica Montseny, November 5, 1932; microfilm, reel 68, EG Papers Project, University of Berkeley, California.

organizations changed the face of the society. Goldman wanted to see that change brought about by the anarchist revolution.

Goldman's debut into the Spanish Civil War in 1936 was provided by her German anarchist comrade Augustin Souchy who was publishing a German bulletin to gather support for the CNT. In July 1936, the Spanish Civil War began; on August 18, Souchy and on August 21, the FAI (Iberian Anarchist Federation)<sup>85</sup>, one of whose founders was Federica Montseny, invited Goldman to Barcelona. As David Porter suggests, "By this time, Goldman had already begun to consider such a course herself and sought to inquire about the possibility with her prior acquaintance Montseny. Goldman's immediate response to Souchy on August 21 indicated that she was 'overjoyed' and proud to receive the invitation."<sup>86</sup> She responded to Souchy as such: "What grander, most worthy cause to devote my last years to than the heroic struggle going on in Spain now?"<sup>87</sup> She arrived in Barcelona in September. One month later in October 1936, General Franco took power in Madrid.

Goldman was elated to be involved in a genuine revolutionary struggle. She noted in a letter: "I will tell you everyone who can come, should, and see with their own eyes the truly extraordinary work done and more planned."<sup>88</sup> When she was in Spain, she took on the task of editing the weekly CNT-FAI *Bulletin* and wrote mails in English. Occasionally, she practiced her profession as a nurse; she worked as a

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<sup>85</sup> Porter, 38. As Porter notes, the FAI (Federación Anarquista Ibérica) was founded secretly in 1927. This militant anarchist group included district and regional federations. It had 39,000 members by 1936. The CNT (Confederación Nacional del Trabajo), founded in Barcelona in 1911, was the anarcho-syndicalist wing of the anarchist movement. It was most influential in northeastern Spain. In 1936, it was the largest syndicalist union in the world.

<sup>86</sup> Ibid.

<sup>87</sup> Emma Goldman to August Souchy, August 21, 1936, in Porter, 38.

<sup>88</sup> Robert W. Kern, "EG to Milly Rucker", September 29, 1936, in "Anarchist Principles and Spanish Reality: EG as a Participant in the Civil War," *Journal of Contemporary History* 11-2/3 (July 1976): 237-259, 238.

canteen worker, and a child-care aide.<sup>89</sup> She visited workers' communities, agricultural collectives, the railroads, transport, oil-gas works, and the aviation yards, all of which were controlled by the CNT [National Confederation of Labor].<sup>90</sup> She made talks on radio programmes; once she delivered a talk to 16.000 people in Barcelona sponsored by Juventudes Libertarias, the youth section of the FAI. In all activities, she communicated with Spanish people in French, or she got help from her translator Mrs. Adams. However, she would develop her reading and writing skills in the Spanish language in a few years.<sup>91</sup>

This chapter revealed the inner workings of Emma Goldman in the American, Soviet Russian and early Spanish context. The reader is now acquainted with her background, her motives and the means she applied on her way to her ideal revolutionary society. Goldman rushed to aid of her friends, as seen in her relationship with Alexander Berkman and in her helping the Cubans and immigrant working-class women. She wrote and lectured prolifically in English to redress the actions of governments, as seen in her speaking out against the conscription and repression of workers. She toured across America to raise funds to help save anarchist periodicals from bankruptcy. She covertly enabled birth-control information to circulate. She co-founded the Ferrer school so that the younger generations would be raised along the anarchist egalitarian lines. In all of these concerns of her, she put briefly, "I am more than ever determined to use every means in my power to spread my doctrines among the people."<sup>92</sup> Goldman would now seem to be equally determined to employ the same methods to aid Spanish women and

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<sup>89</sup> Ibid., 239.

<sup>90</sup> Emma Goldman to Rudolf and Milly Rocker, October 1, 1936, in Ackelsberg, 72.

<sup>91</sup> Porter, 30.

<sup>92</sup> Emma Goldman, "Nellie Bly Again," interview by Nellie Bly, *New York World*, Sep 17, 1893. In Falk et al., *Emma Goldman*, volume 1, 158.

children through her involvement with Mujeres Libres. Also, in the face of Mujeres Libres' endeavor to unshackle themselves from gender bias during their participation in the Spanish Civil War, Goldman would go through her earlier arguments she made in America about sexual matters. This will show that acted as a guide to Mujeres Libres by articulating the group's position during the Spanish Civil War.

## CHAPTER III

### **BUILDING the ANARCHO-FEMINIST SOLIDARITY, 1936**

*C'est pour toi que tu fais la révolution.*  
[It is for yourself that you make the revolution.]

Daniel and Gabriel Cohn-Bendit<sup>93</sup>

This chapter has two aims. First, it will look at Emma Goldman's initial stages of involvement with anarcho-feminist organization Mujeres Libres showing how she applied her anarchist methods in addressing Spanish women. At the outset, the co-founders of Mujeres Libres wanted her to act as their guide in defining their agenda. In the correspondence between them and Goldman, the latter pointed out the repressive effect of the Spanish Church and the patriarchal society on Spanish women, advising them to free themselves of these double fetters by their own initiative which needed to be activated first through Mujeres Libres' collective efforts for empowerment. Collective action, mutual aid, and direct action thus will be seen to be deeply embedded in the anarcho-feminist solidarity of Goldman and Mujeres Libres to determine the self-sufficiency and self-trust of Spanish women.

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<sup>93</sup> Daniel and Gabriel Cohn-Bendit, *Obsolete Communism – The Left Wing Alternative*, (McGraw-Hill, 1968), 256, qtd. in Peggy Kornegger, "Anarchism: The Feminist Connection," in Howard J. Ehrlich, ed., *Reinventing Anarchy, Again*, (CA: AK Press, 1996), 156.

The second aim of this chapter is to expose the fact that Goldman did not need to develop a new rhetoric about the condition of Spanish women, as her arguments made in America about women in general were still valid. Thus, what has long been believed to be pertaining to the rhetoric of *Mujeres Libres* was, in fact, used by Goldman more than three decades before.

For a fuller understanding of why *Mujeres Libres* asked for Goldman's help, the background of Spanish women's condition should be explained first. In the Spanish society, family concerns, the effect of the Church and the patriarchal values were deeply ingrained. Spanish anarcho-feminist group *Mujeres Libres* put much effort to liberate Spanish women from these fetters. This endeavor of theirs was reinforced by Goldman's presence, as she proved an experienced foreign aide to enlighten Spanish women for libertarian thoughts.

Until 1931, when Spain became a republic with the election of the Second Republic (1931-1933), the role of Spanish woman was epitomized as *perfecta casada* [perfect married lady]. She would be engaged with domestic work and her duty as a nurturer in the family was looked as sacred. This traditional role in times of dire straits transformed into rebellious mothers demanding bread for their children in times of food shortage prior to World War I. To this category, as of late nineteenth century, working-class women joined in the face of food shortages and high prices due to World War I conditions. As Mary Nash, historian of Spanish women, suggests, Spanish women organized mass protests one of which was attended by



13.000 women in Barcelona in 1913; and between 1905-1921 they organized more strikes than men to protest low wages and night work for women.<sup>94</sup>

Spanish women's consciousness developed not out of individualistic purposes but out of their concerns for their family. Mary Nash puts this as such:

One of the key factors to an understanding of Spanish social relations in this period is the crucial predominance of the family. In their roles as mothers, workers, and mothers women took part on numerous occasions, in mobilizations and collective struggles dealing with social and labor issues. However, the group interest in these conflicts was not gender-specific.<sup>95</sup>

Temma Kaplan, historian of Spanish anarchism, asserts that this family-oriented women's militancy surfaced not only in Spain. She writes, "In times of political instability and economic problems, when there are food shortages and high prices, female consciousness forced women in Russia, Italy besides Spain into the streets, the public area."<sup>96</sup>

However, in the Congress of Sans in June 1918, the preliminary national conference of the anarcho-syndicalist CNT [National Confederation of Labor], groundbreaking decisions were taken on behalf of both sexes. They confirmed sexual equality, abolishment of child labor, and regulation of eight-hours' work. Thus, with this congress, neo-syndicalism started.<sup>97</sup> With the onset of these regulations in the equality of the sexes, women's organizations also demanded suffrage, equal right, and equal pay. However, as Mary Nash notes, "Spanish feminism tended to fundament its justification for women's rights on the ideal of gender difference and maternalism and focused on civic and social rights for women rather than equality

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<sup>94</sup> Mary Nash, *Defying Male Civilization: Women in the Spanish Civil War*, (Colorado: Arden Press, 1995), 33-34.

<sup>95</sup> *Ibid.*, 23-30.

<sup>96</sup> Temma Kaplan, "Women and Communal Strikes in the Crisis of 1917- 1922," in Renate Bridenthal, ed., *Becoming Visible Women in European History*, (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1977), 210.

<sup>97</sup> Robert W. Kern, *Red Years-Black Years: A Political History of Spanish Anarchism 1911-1937*, (Pennsylvania: ISHI, 1978), 31-32.

with men.”<sup>98</sup> But it was not long before the Second Republic in 1931 gave the franchise to women in its new constitution. Through this new legislation, maternity insurances, labor legislation, education reform, and civil marriage laws were regulated.<sup>99</sup>

In February 1936, the Popular Front won the national election, but on July 18, 1936 an army coup led General Francisco Franco to head the “New State” under his authoritarian right regime.<sup>100</sup> In the anti-fascist struggle, women were called to the homefront for labor in the face of shortage of men. The anarcho-syndicalist CNT and the socialist-communist UGT (the Socialist Trade Union) were the two major wings of labor movement, also included in the Popular Front. They took on the tasks of the State; collectivists from the CNT-UGT coordinated the construction of roads, schools, bridges, canals, and dams. In Catalonia, they ran the energy industry, creating the Central Committee of Workers’ Control of Gas and Electricity. The CNT-UGT also established other facilities for the care and feeding of people by building chicken coops, barns, and dairies.<sup>101</sup> With the eruption of the Civil War, the membership of the CNT reached one million people, four-fifths of whom were new members. The membership of the UGT, on the other hand, increased from 30,000 to 400,000. Tens of thousands of these new members were women.

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<sup>98</sup> Nash, 35.

<sup>99</sup> Alun Kenwood, ed., introduction to *The Spanish Civil War: A Cultural and Historical Reader*, (RI: Berg Publishers, 1993). The Second Republic (1931-1933) was a reformist, republican coalition under Manuel Azaña. It reduced the influence of the military, the Church, and landowners under its regime. It replaced the dictatorship of Miguel Primo de Rivera (1923-1929) and was succeeded by a center-right government (1933-1935).

<sup>100</sup> Ibid. As Kenwood notes, Communists, Socialists, Catalan Separatists and many small center-left parties formed the Popular Front. Their rival in the elections was the right-wing National Front, formed by the Bourbon monarchists, Carlist supporters, Don Carlos and Catholic clergy. In February, the Popular Front won the election with a small percentage, but violence and strikes continued. On July 18 and 19, 1936 Generals Franco, Mola, Queipo de Llano, and Goded overthrew the Second Republic; Franco became the head of the state and Supreme Commander of army, navy and air forces.

<sup>101</sup> Ackelsberg, 79.

As Michael Seidman describes Spanish women in the 1930s, the women newly joined to the union had little “class-consciousness”; they were not committed to the ideals of the Left. Many of them felt uncomfortable at meetings and would not speak. He argues that the reason for many to join unions was that when prices increased more than two and one-half times due to the war inflation, membership to a union would ensure lower prices for food in collective kitchens, job, housing, and medical treatment. But still, women were paid less than men; they earned on average 45 to 55 pesetas a day while men received 52 to 68 pesetas. Moreover, in some workplaces, dining facilities were separated. Worse still, *trabajo a domicilio* [rationalization] was put into effect which banned women workers to take the work to their house.<sup>102</sup> All these practices towards women workers combined to threaten the family-oriented lives of Spanish women.

On the other hand, in order for them to serve the anti-fascist struggle, women were summoned to carry their traditional duties to the homefront. Child-care centers, food kitchens, dairies were established for the war effort. They still nursed, nurtured, and cared for children as they had done in the pre-war years. In this sense, there was no deviation from their traditional roles as Catholic mothers and wives, although Spanish women now channelled these energies into the war effort for the revolutionary struggle. To ask their contributions to the war effort, images on war posters depicted women as nurturers, healers, and auxiliary relief workers. And the cliché slogan of the time was, “Men to the Front, Women to the Homefront.”<sup>103</sup>

It was in these circumstances that *Mujeres Libres* was founded. At the outset, there were two groups, one was named the *Grupo Cultural Femenino* [Female

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<sup>102</sup> Michael Seidman, “Women’s Subversive Individualism In Barcelona During the 1930s,” *International Review of Social History* XXXVII (1992): 161-176, 166-172.

<sup>103</sup> Nash, 54-55.

Cultural Group] founded in 1934 in Barcelona, and the other was Federación Local de Sindicatos de Madrid. Both aimed to avoid discrimination in the ranks of the CNT and to enable women to be more active in the antifascist struggle. Journalist Mercedes Comaposada (1901-1994), telephone operator and poet Lucía Sánchez Saornil (1895-1970), and medical doctor Amparo Poch y Gascon (1902-1968) led the meeting of these two groups, and Agrupación Mujeres Libres was formed in April 1936. It was the best organized women's group on the Left. By the summer of 1938, it included 30,000 members. It had more than 168 local groups concentrated in Catalonia, Aragon, Valencia and Andalusia. For the war effort, women of Mujeres Libres formed sections of transport, health, metallurgy, commerce, bureau, clothing, public services, and mobile brigade which was responsible for the delivery of correspondence and paquets among soldiers and their families. In Barcelona and Madrid, they took jobs in public transport, working as conductors, drivers, and mechanics. They ran much of the public transport system.<sup>104</sup> As seen, as well as offering services conducive to their traditional roles as nurturers and caretakers, Mujeres Libres also moved into the public area in the shortage of men, working side by side with their male counterparts in order to help the anti-fascist struggle.

As Laura Sánchez Blanco describes the purposes of Mujeres Libres, "The emancipation of working-class women was the prior goal of the group, as she was the slave of work, ignorance and her sex. The sexual emancipation of working-class women was of key concern as it would make them equal with men. 'Free love' and

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<sup>104</sup> For further information on the foundation of Mujeres Libres, see Martha Ackelsberg, *Free Women of Spain: Anarchism and the Struggle for the Emancipation of Women*, (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1991), 87-114.; Laura Sánchez Blanco, "El Anarchofeminismo En España: Las Propuestas Anarquistas De Mujeres Libres Para Conseguir La Igualdad De Géneros," *Foro de Educación* no. 9, (2007): 229-238, 229-239.; Lucía Sánchez Saornil, "La 'Femme' dans la guerre et dans la révolution: Mujeres Libres 1936," *CNT* number 531, January 30, Madrid, 1937.; Mary Nash, *Defying Male Civilization: Women in the Spanish Civil War*, (Colorado: Arden Press, 1995), 78-93, and "Mujeres Libres": *España 1936-1939*, (Barcelona: Tusquets Editor, 1975), 12-39.; Temma Kaplan, "Spanish Anarchism and Women's Liberation," *Journal of Contemporary History* 6-2 (1971).

‘polygamy’ were topics anarchists defended in the face of subordination brought with marriage.”<sup>105</sup> As to the matter of ignorance, given that the rate of illiteracy was high among Spanish women - by 1900, 71 percent of them were illiterate - *Mujeres Libres* offered basic education to them.

On the other hand, although since 1910 they were granted to pursue university degrees, women’s chance to enter university to get the necessary qualification for professional jobs was very weak. To give one example, “in the 1923-1924 semester, at the Zaragoza Faculty of Medicine, [where Amparo Poch, the co-founder of *Mujeres Libres* studied,] there were 523 students registered, only four of whom were female.”<sup>106</sup> However, professional training for women was necessary so that they could get a job which would make them economically independent. The institution of *Mujeres Libres* in Barcelona, the *Casal de la Dona Treballadora* which was attended by nearly 800 women, offered such classes for this purpose:

Elementary Classes: Reading, writing, arithmetic, geography, grammar, and natural phenomena

Classes Complementary to Elementary Education: World History, French, English, Russian, typing, and stenography

Complementary Professional Classes: Nursing, child care, skills (mechanics, electricity, business), sewing, and agriculture

Social Formation: Union organization, sociology, economics, and general culture<sup>107</sup>

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<sup>105</sup> “La liberación de la mujer obrera era el objetivo prioritario de *Mujeres Libres*, porque aquella era una esclava del trabajo, de la ignorancia y de su condición sexual. Debido a las altas tasas de analfabetismo femenino, la primera tarea de *Mujeres Libres* consistía en ofrecer una educación básica a las mujeres, para acabar con la esclavitud de la ignorancia. También era necesario que tuvieran una formación profesional para conseguir un empleo que les permitiese la independencia económica. Y por último, la liberación sexual era la clave para que la mujer tuviese la misma libertad que el hombre. El amor libre y la poligamia fueron cuestiones que defendían las anarquistas en contra de la subordinación del matrimonio.” Laura Sánchez Blanco, “El Anarchofeminismo En España: Las Propuestas Anarquistas De *Mujeres Libres* Para Conseguir La Igualdad De Géneros,” *Foro de Educación* no 9, (2007): 229-238, 233.

<sup>106</sup> “En el curso 1923-1924 había matriculados en la Facultad de Medicina de Zaragoza 523 alumnos, de los que cuatro eran mujeres.” In Antonina Rodrigo, *Una mujer libre, Amparo Poch y Gascón: médica y anarquista*, (Barcelona: Flor del Viento Ediciones, 2002), 31.

<sup>107</sup> Ackelsberg, 119.

As seen, Spanish women were trained in all kinds of areas. All of the classes given above were aimed at preparing women for both the revolutionary struggle and also for the new anarchist society to be established after the defeat of the fascist forces. Spanish women, then, would be able to be integrated into the labor force, as they knew typing, economics, and nursing. In the new anarchist society, as women would know several languages, they would be able to develop an international vision, and follow the anarchist events worldwide without turning to their men for help. These classes, in short, by training their skills, would make Spanish women self-sufficient, and develop their self-confidence. Overall, in their new state, they would benefit more to the new anarchist society.

On May 20, 1936, Mercedes Comaposada, Lúcia Sánchez Saornil, and Amparo Poch published the group's magazine *Mujeres Libres*. This magazine, like the classes, also aimed to raise consciousness of working-class women for the revolutionary struggle [captación] and empowerment [capacitación]. The magazine also raised money, as the group had little financial support from its mother organization, the CNT. To better serve as a medium of empowerment for women, the magazine aimed to attract the attention of several others to their activities through propaganda work. Thus, raising money and getting help from people to further their cause would be facilitated. This scheme was in fact inherent in the group's administration pattern. Lucía Sánchez Saornil, the co-founder of *Mujeres Libres*, reports this pattern as such: "There is a committee directing the group which is responsible for three areas: counselling, culture and propaganda. Under its administration, there are subcommittees whose exclusive tasks are the following: work, solidarity in favor of *Mujeres Libres*, and to sustain morale in the front. The

committee of solidarity is charged to negotiate with syndicates, cultural centers, and others who might assist us so that our group will develop.”<sup>108</sup>

Mujeres Libres’ publishing their own magazine and in this work their fervor to do the propaganda work are reminiscent of Emma Goldman’s activities in this field. She had also published her own journal *Mother Earth* to share her commitments. Like *Mujeres Libres*, this journal also was a source of fundraising. For propaganda work, like Goldman, the co-founders of Mujeres Libres also toured many places to acquaint women with the group’s work. They made regular radio broadcasts, they toured the Catalan countryside to reach women in every corner. They also provided circulating libraries for local use.<sup>109</sup> So, propaganda both in person and writing was crucial for spreading the message for Mujeres Libres, as well as for Goldman.

Thus, looking for aides to support their group, in April 1936, Mercedes Comaposada sent a letter to Emma Goldman requesting her contributions in the form of an article to their magazine to be published. As suggested earlier, Goldman would arrive in Spain only in September. Thus, her name must have been well-known to the three co-founders of Mujeres Libres by then. From April 17, 1936 onwards, there were seven letters exchanged between Goldman and Mercedes Comaposada.<sup>110</sup>

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<sup>108</sup> “À sa tête est un comité responsable de trois compagnes se charge de l’administration et des questions de conseil, culture et propagande. Sous son contrôle, fonctionnent des sous-comités dont les compétences exclusives sont les suivantes : le travail, la solidarité en faveur de Mujeres Libres, et le soutien moral au front. La commission Solidarité se charge de négocier auprès des syndicats, athénées, et autres, des dons ou subventions pour permettre le développement de notre Groupe.” Lucía Sánchez Saornil, “La ‘femme’ dans la guerre et dans la révolution: Mujeres Libres 1936,” *CNT* numéro 531, Madrid, January 30, 1937.

<sup>109</sup> Ackelsberg, 121.

<sup>110</sup> *Ibid.*, 92-93. Mercedes Comaposada Guillén (1901-1994) was born into an emigrant family in Barcelona. Her father was a shoe-maker, but also a self-proclaimed ‘cultural worker’. He knew French and German. He was for a time Spanish correspondent of *La Humanité*. In 1888, he joined the UGT, in one of whose committees he would preside. He acquainted Mercedes with the revolutionary theory that would transform the society through culture which was the key element in manumission.

In the first letter Comaposada sent to Goldman, she explains in French their motives as a group and asks Goldman to write an article for *Mujeres Libres*,

We, a few anarchists, are on the track of realizing an interesting idea; the publication of *Mujeres Libres* with the aim of arousing women's interest to some subjects they have never thought of up to present. Our purpose is to awaken their consciousness to libertarian ideas, with most of which Spanish women have little familiarity, as for so long they were socially and culturally held backward. We ask your collaboration- our penurie will prevent us from remunerating your services- to the magazine with a free topic.... We hope that you will see our efforts for Spanish women, as up to present nobody has ever shown interest in our organizations.<sup>111</sup>

On April 24, 1936 Goldman responded to Comaposada in English:

I congratulate you dear comrade on your decision to help emancipate the Spanish women. I confess when I was in Spain in 1929, I was shocked at the backwardness of the women in Spain, their submission to the Church and to the men in their lives; fathers, brothers, and husbands. It seemed to me that the Spanish woman was still terribly under the yoke of the double standard of morality between men and women, and their slavery as only domestic servants and constant bearers of the Spanish masses can not hope to achieve their economic and social liberation until women have advanced far enough to take their place with men in the revolutionary struggle for the emancipation from wage slavery.<sup>112</sup>

In the letter to her friend Harry Kelly, Goldman again criticized the condition of Spanish women. This letter, instead of an article, would appear in *Mujeres Libres* number 6, as the first address of Goldman to Spanish women under the title of "La situación social de la mujer". She wrote in her 1936 letter:

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Mercedes worked for a film company at the age of 12. She recalled that "they [her colleagues] were all in the CNT, so I joined too." She joined the CNT, as she wanted to work for proletarian women. She studied law in Madrid, then she taught workers.

<sup>111</sup> "Quelques anarchistes espagnoles sommes en train de réaliser une idée intéressante: la publication d'une revue intitulée 'MUJERES LIBRES' - 'Femmes Libres' - avec une finalité captation près de la femme, de l'intéresser dans des thèmes et situations auxquels elle n'a pas pensé jusqu'à présent, ou elle l'a fait sans une orientation propre. Notre propos est d'éveiller la conscience féminine vers des idées libertaires, dont l'immense plus part des femmes espagnoles-très retardées sociale et culturellement- n'ont pas la plus légère connaissance. Nous prions te collaboration- Notre penurie ne nous permetra pas retribuer- avec la thème libre.... Nous espérons que tu verras bien notre petition pour las femmes espagnoles, puisque personne n'a pas jusqu'à présent, montre aucun intérêt noble dans nos organisations." Mercedes Comaposada to Emma Goldman, April 17, 1936; microfilm, reel 68, EG Papers Project, University of Berkeley, California.

<sup>112</sup> Emma Goldman to Mercedes Comaposada, April 24, 1936. Reel 37.



There is the education and emancipation of woman, the new approach to the child, to common ordinary questions of health. All that has been sadly neglected by our comrades.... Only when you have freed yourself from the superstitions of religion, double standard of morality will you become a force in the anti-Fascist battle - only when will you be able to and worthy to help build the new free society where every man, woman and child will be truly free.<sup>113</sup>

Goldman here stated the path for *Mujeres Libres* with her appeal to education of women and new approach to children. Goldman also referred to the vital importance of having free women in a society free from the fascist rule. In fact, she revealed her endorsement of free women in a newspaper article written 39 years ago, in 1897:

I demand freedom for both sexes, freedom of action, freedom in love and freedom in motherhood. Do not tell me that this can only be accomplished under Anarchy; this is entirely wrong. If we want to accomplish Anarchy, we must have free women at least, those women who are economically just as independent as their brothers are, and unless we have free women, we can not have free mothers, and if mothers are not free, we can not expect the younger generation to assist us in the accomplishment of our aim, that is the establishment of an Anarchist society.<sup>114</sup>

Goldman would repeat these words in her appeal to Spanish women. Goldman also attacked the Church and the patriarchal society in her above address in *Mujeres Libres*; she emphasized the importance of having free women in a revolutionary society free of the Church and patriarchal values. She, in fact, reiterated the same line of reasoning she had argued many years before when she was in America. In her essay "Marriage and Love" published in *Anarchism and Other Essays* (1910), she had noted about free motherhood:

The defenders of authority dread the advent of a free motherhood, lest it will rob them of their prey. Who would fight wars? Who would create wealth? If women were to refuse the indiscriminate breeding of children? In vain, the edicts of the Church, in vain, too, even the army of the law. Woman no longer

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<sup>113</sup> Emma Goldman to Harry Kelly, May 5, 1936, in Porter, 256-257.

<sup>114</sup> Emma Goldman, "What is There in Anarchy For Women," *St. Louis Post-Dispatch Sunday Magazine*, Oct 24, 1897. In Candace Falk et al., *Emma Goldman: A Documentary History of the American Years, Made for America, (1890-1901)*, volume 1, (California: University of Berkeley Press, 2003), 289.

wants to be a party to the production of children who can not throw off the yoke of poverty and slavery.<sup>115</sup>

Here Goldman challenged the notion of women's subordination to involuntary child-bearing. According to her, children without sufficient means would only serve the capitalist class, making it hard for anarchists to fight against capitalism, and the Church. The same was true in the Spanish case, as overabundant children without proper care and training would only debilitate their mothers and the anarchist force. In the face of such threat, as the next chapter will show, anarcho-feminists would advocate voluntary motherhood through the application of birth-control methods.

The Spanish anarchist leader Federica Montseny, the first female Minister of Spain, who served as the Minister of Health and Social Assistance, fourteen years later, in 1924, would employ the same rhetoric, addressing women not to give birth to children for slavery or war.<sup>116</sup> *Mujeres Libres* was also of the same opinion. And this line of thinking separated them from other women's organizations during the Spanish Civil War. Mary Nash makes this point clear saying that Spanish women were in general called to raise sons to fight fascism, but the stance *Mujeres Libres* took was against raising more soldiers. Rather, the group favored collective action for mothers to meet the needs of their sons fighting in the war. They epitomized this argument in this slogan: "The mother who hugs her child to her breast is not a better mother than she who helps to forge a new world."<sup>117</sup> This radical stance of the group would also shape their view of birth control as the next chapter will show.

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<sup>115</sup> Emma Goldman, "Marriage and Love," in Alix Kates Shulman, ed., *Red Emma Speaks: An Emma Goldman Reader*, (New York: Humanity Books, 1998), 212.

<sup>116</sup> Federica Montseny, "El Alma de España," in Shirley F. Fredricks, "Social And Political Thought of Federica Montseny, Spanish Anarchist 1923-1937" (PhD diss., University of New Mexico, 1972), 133.

<sup>117</sup> Nash, 58.

Another of Goldman's essays, "The Tragedy of Woman's Emancipation", published in *Anarchism and Other Essays* (1910), carries the same tone with her letter to Comaposada in that it had called for women to be self-determined in order to be free.

The true emancipation begins neither at the polls nor in courts. It begins in woman's soul. History tells us that every oppressed class gained true liberation from its masters through its own efforts. It is therefore far more important for her to begin with her inner regeneration, to cut loose from the weight of prejudice, traditions, and customs.<sup>118</sup>

The same rhetoric as to the emancipation's beginning in woman's soul was used by Federica Montseny in her same-entitled essay "La Tragedia de la emancipación femenina" which appeared in second issue of *La Revista Blanca*. This essay was not same kind of translation of Goldman's essay, but Montseny adopted the same line of arguments from Goldman. To give one example, As Shirley F. Fredricks suggests in her doctoral dissertation about Montseny's social and political thought, "Montseny thought that the emancipation had to 'begin in the soul of women'. She knew too that once totally implemented, the difference that emancipation would make in society would be revolutionary."<sup>119</sup> Goldman had earlier employed the same rhetoric about the beginning of emancipation in woman's soul.

After Montseny, other Spanish women's magazines also adopted the same rhetoric. For instance, *Companya*, an anarchist women's magazine, initiated by the PSUC [the Catalan Communist Party] in March 1937, put that "the women's emancipation belongs to the women."<sup>120</sup> The next chapter will show more examples from Spanish anarchists' adopting the same vocabulary and rhetoric from Goldman. Given that Goldman's cheap pamphlets and translated essays had been issued by the

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<sup>118</sup> Emma Goldman, "The Tragedy of Woman's Emancipation," in Shulman, 167.

<sup>119</sup> Federica Montseny, "La Tragedia de la emancipación femenina," in Fredricks, 123.

<sup>120</sup> Ibid.

Spanish anarchist press in the 1920s and 1930s, including her writings on Russia, marriage and love, prostitution, and the liberated woman,<sup>121</sup> Goldman seems to have had great influence on Spanish anarcho-feminists in setting their anarchist sex-reform agenda.

Goldman, in her letter to Comaposada and Harry Kelly, had referred to the Catholic Church in Spain, for it restricted the freedom of Spanish women. Until 1931, when the Second Republic was elected and separated the State and the Church, the latter was omnipresent in Spain. As Robert W. Kern, historian of Spanish anarchism, reports, the Church used to control schools, public relief, and labor issues. However, it did not call for a widespread extension of education; nor did it endorse paying unemployment or industrial accident insurance.<sup>122</sup> Women's role as *perfecta casada* [perfect married lady] was also favored by the Church. However, for anarchists Goldman and Mujeres Libres alike, the interference of the Church with women's lives should have been dispensed with. In her essay "An Unexpected Dash Through Spain" written in 1929, Goldman recalled her coming to know the Spanish Church:

Yes, the Church of Spain is all-powerful. One does not have to be there long to see that. Its force was brought home by the remark of a cultured Jew, a man who has lived in Spain for fifty years. He said it was impossible to talk confidentially to any Spaniard, because the latter would report what was said to his wife: "We do not care if we have the men, so long as we can influence the women." What he failed to say was that the church in Spain can count on the women because the men want them to continue in an abject and ignorant state.<sup>123</sup>

Besides Goldman, Spanish anarchists themselves also denounced the authority of the Church, as it ignored its social responsibilities. Federica Montseny wrote that she and

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<sup>121</sup> Porter, 38.

<sup>122</sup> Kern, 4-5.

<sup>123</sup> Emma Goldman, "An Unexpected Dash Through Spain," *The Road to Freedom* (New York) Part I, Vol. 5, no. 8, (April, 1929), <http://sunsite.berkeley.edu/Goldman/Writings/Essays/spain1929.html>.

her comrades thought the Spanish Church to be a basic factor in the misery of the Spanish people. Thus, they concurred that the social responsibilities left undone by the Church should be fulfilled by anarchists themselves collectively for a more egalitarian and free society.<sup>124</sup>

The term “collective action” was deeply ingrained in Goldman’s and *Mujeres Libres*’ understanding of anarchism. In America, in the face of injustices, Emma Goldman had taken the initiative in collective action with her anarchist comrades, and tried to realize a society along the anarchist lines. She rushed to aid her anarchist comrades and working-class women. She founded the Ferrer School, and the “No-Conscription League” in collaboration with her comrades. She raised money for anarchist periodicals on the verge of bankruptcy. When she was in need of money, as seen in the case of her publication of her autobiography in 1931, her comrades, in return, aided her. They also helped her enter America for a ninety-day lecture tour by a special permission of the Roosevelt administration.<sup>125</sup> *Mujeres Libres*, like Emma Goldman and her anarchist comrades, also cherished collective action. In collective action, this group empowered working-class women socially and culturally. Under its direction, child-care centers, health services, delivery brigades, and agricultural collectives were established. On both sides of the Atlantic, this understanding of collective action in anarchist ideology took root in order to establish an egalitarian society along the anarchist lines.

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<sup>124</sup> Federica Montseny, “Actitud negativa de la Iglesia,” in Fredricks, 101-102.

<sup>125</sup> Oz Frankel, “Whatever Happened to ‘Red Emma’? Emma Goldman, from Alien Rebel to American Icon,” *The Journal of American History* 83-3 (Dec., 1996): 903-942, 905. As Frankel says, “President Franklin D. Roosevelt declared an amnesty for American citizens and alien residents who had been prosecuted for obstructing the draft during the war. Since Goldman’s citizenship was revoked in 1909, she could benefit from the amnesty only indirectly. Sinclair Lewis, Sherwood Anderson, Roger Baldwin, and John Dewey spearheaded the negotiations with the Department of Labor for admitting Goldman for a short visit.” 909-910.

For both Goldman and Mujeres Libres, collective action preceded individual endeavor, although the latter was never lost. It was through collective action that Spanish women's consciousness would be raised; as Goldman wrote in her letter to Mercedes Comaposada "they may awaken the Spanish women to their place in the social struggle for human liberation from the fetters that are binding her."<sup>126</sup> Once the fetters of the Church and the patriarchal society are done away, women would get jobs after learning how to read and write, and learning skills. Thus, true emancipation for women would begin; they would now individually decide whether to get married or to have children. For Mujeres Libres, the Spanish Civil War context provided this opportunity to transform the revolutionary struggle to their own individualistic ends to emancipate themselves from gender bias. As Martha Ackelsberg notes,

The Spanish anarchist perspective on empowerment and consciousness-change can be understood best by examining their commitment to "direct action". Direct action meant that the goal of any and all of these activities was to provide ways for people to get in touch with their own powers and capacities.... Whether through consciousness-raising groups or in community organizing, participating in such activities would have both internal and external effects, allowing people to develop a sense of competence and self-confidence while they acted to change their situation.<sup>127</sup>

Through their collective effort, Goldman and Mujeres Libres led the way for Spanish women to take "direct action" in their lives to be emancipated from the Church and the patriarchal society. According to Ackelsberg, however, "direct action", besides empowering individuals, also affected others through "propaganda by the deed". This phrase meant bomb-throwing, assassination attempts, and the like. Some contemporary examples of it, on the other hand, were illustrated in food or day-care coops, collectively run businesses, women's self-help health collectives,

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<sup>126</sup> Emma Goldman to Mercedes Comaposada, June 24, 1936. Reel 37.

<sup>127</sup> Ackelsberg, 32-33.

and the like.<sup>128</sup> Goldman performed both methods of “direct action” before her arrival in Spain. She sympathized with the Haymarket martyrs in the bomb-throwing incident, she helped Berkman in his attempted assassination on Henry Clay Frick, and found Leon Czolgosz right in his assassination of President McKinley. She incited the unemployed to riot, and she violated laws by propagandizing for birth control and against conscription. *Mujeres Libres*, on the other hand, took on themselves “direct action” and “propaganda by the deed” by helping Spanish women to empower themselves, helping the Spanish refugees, and founding *liberatorios* [liberation homes for prostitutes]. A foreign aide to *Mujeres Libres* like Goldman, then, who was much earlier experienced than themselves in taking “direct action” both in anarchist and sexual matters, was indeed to the group’s benefit.

This understanding of collective action inherent in the anarchist thought originally derived its energy from the teaching of Russian anarchist and geographer Peter Kropotkin (1842-1921). As Martha Ackelsberg, chronicler of *Mujeres Libres*, writes, “*Mujeres Libres* made frequent appeals to Kropotkin’s claim that social life was regulated not by an antagonistic struggle for survival, but by ‘mutual aid’: ‘Without association, no life is possible.’”<sup>129</sup> Robert W. Kern, historian of Spanish anarchism, summarized Kropotkin’s views as such: “In *Mutual Aid* (1902) which began to appear in article form, Kropotkin examined the cooperative elements of human survival. Mutual aid made it seem possible to envelop society in a web of communes and collectives until the State was no longer necessary.”<sup>130</sup>

Emma Goldman’s theory of anarchism was also based on Kropotkin’s teachings. She had personally met Kropotkin in Europe during Anarchist Congresses.

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<sup>128</sup> Ibid.

<sup>129</sup> Ibid., 21.

<sup>130</sup> Kern, 22.

She described him in her autobiography as the “clearest thinker and theoretician”.<sup>131</sup> However, the two had disagreed as to whether sexual matters should be incorporated into the anarchist thought. As Alice Wexler, biographer of Goldman, suggests, Goldman was accused of concentrating excessively on sexual issues by Kropotkin and his followers.<sup>132</sup> But on the issue of mutual aid, her propaganda works were taken to be as best illustrations of her following Kropotkin. As Candace Falk, the editor of EG Papers Project, suggests, “Emma Goldman’s position on the issue of ‘propaganda by the deed’ bore the important influence of Kropotkin.”<sup>133</sup>

As Martha Ackelsberg suggests, “The women of *Mujeres Libres* understood consciousness-change and empowerment to be both individual and collective processes. They believed that empowerment could take place only in the context of communities and/or organizations that acknowledged and valued the diversity of their constituents.”<sup>134</sup> Their constituents were overwhelmingly women, and in the upper cadres, women presided. Then, the question of whether they operated in collective action with men arises. *Mujeres Libres* wanted autonomy from the umbrella organization the CNT to further the emancipation of women, for, as Lucía Sánchez Saornil put on behalf of anarchist women that their male counterparts in the CNT treated them as inferior.<sup>135</sup> However, they did not forego the revolutionary struggle shoulder-to-shoulder with men. As they suggested in *Mujeres Libres*, “We do not fight against men, We do not aim to replace male hegemony with that of females. It is necessary to work and fight together, otherwise we can never have

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<sup>131</sup> Emma Goldman, *Living My Life*, volume 1, (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1970), 168.

<sup>132</sup> Alice Wexler, *Emma Goldman: An Intimate Life* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1984), 102.

<sup>133</sup> Falk et al., *Emma Goldman*, volume 1, 16.

<sup>134</sup> Ackelsberg, 11.

<sup>135</sup> Lucía Sánchez Saornil, “Crónica del día: El trabajo de la mujer,” *Solidaridad Obrera*, Oct 25, 1935, in Ackelsberg, 98.



social revolution, but still we need our own organization to fight for ourselves.”<sup>136</sup> In these words, readers are led to think that sexual revolution would come after the anti-fascist struggle which was the top priority for the group.

However, the equality between the two sexes that would come after the anti-fascist struggle was equally important for *Mujeres Libres*. In this connection, as Martha Ackelsberg says, “Their writings [Goldman, Montseny, Saornil and Poch] implied that any existing differences in attitude or perspective between men and women were rooted in societal oppression and would disappear in a more egalitarian society.”<sup>137</sup> As a member of *Mujeres Libres*, Nita Nahuel said, “After the social revolution, we, the women, will have our own revolution.”<sup>138</sup> So, men and women, both free from societal pressures, would live in harmony in the new anarchist society. As Goldman also said, “Woman, to be free, must be the mutual friend and mate of man.”<sup>139</sup> They were not to be freed from one another, but the patriarchal and fascist state. Anyway, in her private life, Goldman with Alexander Berkman, Ben Reitman, and her other lover-comrades in America set the example of an anarchist solidarity without gender bias.

In the Spanish anarcho-feminists’ lives men also held important place. For instance, Federica Montseny, Mercedes Comaposada, and Sara Berenguer of *Mujeres Libres* derived their first inspiration for anarchism from their CNT-affiliated fathers. Federica Montseny’s parents Federico Urales and Soledad Gustavo were a

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<sup>136</sup> “No luchamos contra los hombres, No pretendemos sustituir el dominio masculino por el femenino. Es necesario trabajar y luchar juntos pues sino nunca tendremos la revolución social. Pero necesitamos nuestra propia organización para luchar por nosotras mismas.” In Nelson Méndez, “*Mujeres Libres De España 1936-1939: Cuando florecieron las rosas de fuego*,” *Otras Miradas* 2-001, (June 2002): 29-37, 33.

<sup>137</sup> Ackelsberg, 175.

<sup>138</sup> “Después de la revolución social, tendremos que hacer las mujeres ‘nuestra revolución’.” In Helena Andrés Granel, “*Mujeres Libres: emancipación femenina y revolución*.” *Germinal* 2, (October, 2006): 43-57, 51.

<sup>139</sup> Emma Goldman, “The New Woman,” *Free Society*, Feb 13, 1898. In Falk et al., *Emma Goldman*, volume 1, 392.

libertarian couple, known for their anarchist tendencies as reflected in their publication *La Revista Blanca*.<sup>140</sup> Federica Montseny maintained that her father's vision of the world drew her with great force towards anarchism.<sup>141</sup> Likewise, Mercedes Comaposada's and Sara Berenguer's fathers were involved with the CNT and influenced their daughters' choice of ideology. From their young age, they were shaped within the anarchist milieu. They worked side by side with all CNT members regardless of sex. With their male counterparts of the CNT, they combined forces to realize the social revolution to eliminate fascism and also to build a society free from gender bias.

Mujeres Libres was the first women's organization to demand institutional autonomy in the anarchist milieu. However, there were disagreements among the CNT cadres as to having a specific female organization. Federica Montseny objected to such a proposition, as she believed that there was a "problem of sexes"; and "change would come not through enfranchisement or equalization of rights but through humanistic revolution allowing unlimited freedom and individualism to both sexes."<sup>142</sup> As seen there were internal conflicts within the CNT about the establishment of Mujeres Libres, and only a few were the proponents of founding and developing the group. To solicit moral support, Mercedes Comaposada in her June 20, 1936 letter to Goldman, mentioned that they were forming adult classes in elemental teaching to prepare good propaganda workers of which they were so much in need.<sup>143</sup> They sought further cooperation from Goldman, too, seeing that her letters published in *Mujeres Libres* had great success. Comaposada wrote in French

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<sup>140</sup> Susanna Tavera, *Federica Montseny: La indomable*, (Madrid: temas de hoy, 2005), 31.

<sup>141</sup> Gretchen A. Bowder, "Federica Montseny and Mujeres Libres: Two Approaches To Women's Emancipation Based in Spanish Anarchism" (Bachelor of Science diss., Massachusetts Institute of Technology, 1987), 12.

<sup>142</sup> Kern, 48.

<sup>143</sup> Mercedes Comaposada to Emma Goldman, June 20, 1936. Reel 40.

to Goldman who was in Nice at that time, “The magazine has had a great success.... We insist on your aid, as we are sure that if a few ablest comrades could be with us, libertarian revolution can be made in Spain. Our wish is that you personally work with us, but if this is now impossible, at least please help us from afar.”<sup>144</sup>

As a response to Comaposada’s letter, Goldman penned in English her last letter of 1936 saying, “I am convinced that without the solidarity and cooperation of our sex, our movement will not play an important part in the revolutionization of the masses.”<sup>145</sup> She ended her letter by suggesting to Comaposada to order a copy of her autobiography *Living My Life* (1931) from its publisher in New York. She wrote, “You would find a great deal of material dealing with my work among women.... By the way, perhaps you could even find a publisher in Spain to get it out in your country.”<sup>146</sup> As clearly seen in these words, Goldman, as she did in America, kept spreading her anarchist doctrines among Spanish people through her writings, seeing that “tens of thousands of books, newspapers, and pamphlets reaching almost every part of Spain contributed to an even greater knowledge of anarchist thought.”<sup>147</sup> The letters she penned also served this purpose, as they both guided the co-founders of *Mujeres Libres*, and also through appearing in *Mujeres Libres*, these letters enlightened Spanish women about their inferior condition and showed them ways to overcome it.

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<sup>144</sup> “La revue a eu un grand success.... Nous demandons ton aide avec autant d’insistence parce que nous sommes surs que si quelques camarades étrangers des plus capacités pouvent être pres de nous, on fairait en Espagne la révolution libertaire. Notre desire serait que tu vinses travailler persoñalement avec nous, mais si ceci n’est pas possible, au moins aide-nous de loin.” Mercedes Comaposada to Emma Goldman, June 16, 1936. Reel 37.

<sup>145</sup> Emma Goldman to Mercedes Comaposada, June 24, 1936. Reel 37.

<sup>146</sup> Ibid.

<sup>147</sup> Peggy Kornegger, “Anarchism: The Feminist Connection,” in Howard J. Ehrlich, ed., *Reinventing Anarchy, Again*, (CA: AK Press, 1996), 161.

This chapter examined the initial stages of moral support and propaganda work between Emma Goldman and Mujeres Libres. Goldman through her letters became a source of inspiration for the newly founded Mujeres Libres. The group's magazine *Mujeres Libres*, like *Mother Earth* was to Goldman in America, turned out to be the road map for Mujeres Libres' anarcho-feminist agenda. Goldman helped Mujeres Libres shape this road map. On issues of women's being exploited by the Church and the patriarchal society and in pursuing collective anarchist action to overcome them, Goldman guided Mujeres Libres. She did not need to develop a new discourse on the situation and solutions she offered for Spanish women. In the Spanish case, Goldman advocated her earlier writings which were originally aimed for American working-class women. As the war progressed, Goldman would offer more of her services for Mujeres Libres.

## CHAPTER IV

### THE ANARCHO-FEMINISTS, AS PROMOTERS of SPANISH WOMEN'S SELF-AWARENESS, 1937

*Affirming the promise of life  
we defy tradition  
we mold the warm clay  
of a new world born of pain.*<sup>148</sup>

from *Mujeres Libres*' Anthem, Valencia 1937

This chapter will look at the agenda of *Mujeres Libres* in 1937 when Emma Goldman became the representative of the magazine *Mujeres Libres* in Europe and the USA. In 1937, the magazine covered the issues of marriage, the education of mothers, free-love, birth control, voluntary motherhood, and the elimination of prostitution. The aim of this chapter, besides exposing what the year 1937 brought for Goldman and *Mujeres Libres*, is to show that Goldman had already made the same arguments earlier than *Mujeres Libres*. Thus, ironically, when she came to represent *Mujeres Libres*, she was actually representing the arguments she pioneered while she was in America. Goldman was in London during this period of time,

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<sup>148</sup> From *Mujeres Libres*' Anthem by Lucía Sánchez Saornil, in Martha Ackelsberg, preface to *Free Women of Spain: Anarchism and the Struggle for the Emancipation of Women*, (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1991).

working as an official representative of the anarcho-syndicalist CNT [National Confederation of Labor]. She started to raise funds for the newly evacuated Spanish women and children. In the meantime, as the representative of *Mujeres Libres*, she was trying to sell this magazine in women's circles. Goldman was also chosen as the delegate of *Mujeres Libres*, thus she was attending women's conferences in Europe to solicit aid for *Mujeres Libres*.

At the beginning of 1937, Goldman was in London to make propaganda work for *Mujeres Libres* to raise money. Goldman wrote to the co-founder of *Mujeres Libres*, Mercedes Comaposada in English in her February 18, 1937 letter:

It is very hard to be so cut off from you. Especially it is hard when one wants to carry on a big campaign for the struggle at your end.... I have received the *Mujeres Libres*, I am going to have it on sale at the exhibition hoping that some Spanish people will attend. As to writing for you it is impossible now. I can not spare the time.<sup>149</sup>

In this letter, it is seen that Goldman endeavored to help *Mujeres Libres* through propaganda-in-writing by selling the magazine *Mujeres Libres*. She tried to spread the anarchist doctrines through this magazine. She also made propaganda-in-person. As she said in the same letter, "The women in this country [England] are indifferent to the suffering of the Spanish people.... However, one of my plans is to try and rouse them to the tragic situation in Spain."<sup>150</sup> To this end, she attended the meetings of the Six Points Club of English women, and on behalf of *Mujeres Libres*, she attended the Conference in Geneva four months later in June 1937.<sup>151</sup>

By this time, Goldman had endeared herself to *Mujeres Libres*. Now, both parties' anarcho-feminist solidarity would gain an official dimension. On June 30,

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<sup>149</sup> Emma Goldman to Mercedes Comaposada, February 18, 1937; microfilm, reel 39, EG Papers Project, University of Berkeley, California.

<sup>150</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>151</sup> Emma Goldman to Mercedes Comaposada, June 20, 1937. Reel 40.

1937, Mercedes Comaposada sent Goldman a note that notified the latter that she would become the delegate of the newly created National Federation of *Mujeres Libres*. The note in French read:

At last! The document accredits you as our representative.... Next month, we will have a new national conference composed of our several groups, and we want you to be our delegate of the National Federation which will result from this conference.<sup>152</sup>

In another note sent to Goldman the following day in July 1, 1937, she was notified by Comaposada of her being chosen as the representative of the magazine *Mujeres Libres*: “This document acknowledges the comrade Emma Goldman as the correspondent and representative of the ‘*Mujeres Libres*’ publications in Europe and the United States of America.”<sup>153</sup> The foreign comrade Goldman would now introduce the cause of *Mujeres Libres* to the people on two continents. It was she who had first sowed the seeds of libertarian thoughts in *Mujeres Libres* during the course of group’s defining its agenda. She counselled them to do what she had advocated earlier in America against the patriarchal values. At that time, she was barred by the American government from seeing the result of her efforts. But now in the anarchist aura of Spain, Goldman could realize her ideal society. In this sense, the fact that the magazine *Mujeres Libres* would now appear in America indicates the return of Goldman’s thoughts to the soil where they originally grew. Goldman had been deported from America on a ship in 1919, but eighteen years later, her anarcho-feminist stance made a comeback in the form of a magazine, *Mujeres Libres*.

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<sup>152</sup> “par fin! Le document t’acreditant comme notre représentante. Le mois prochain nous aurons une nouvelle structuration national comprenant toutes nos Agrupaciones, et nous voulons te faire déléguée de la Fédération qu’en sortira.” Mercedes Comaposada to Emma Goldman, June 30, 1937. Reel 43.

<sup>153</sup> “La presente acredita a la compañera Emma Goldman como corresponsal y representante de las ‘Publicaciones *Mujeres Libres*’ en Europa y Estados Unidos de América.” Mercedes Comaposada to Emma Goldman, July 1, 1937. Reel 43.

As the Comaposada's note mentioned it, Mujeres Libres was finally given institutional autonomy in 1937. In August 1937, ninety independent local groups of the organization came together in the first national conference and Mujeres Libres grew into Federación Nacional Mujeres Libres. Then, delegations were formed for particular tasks. In this federal structure national and regional committees were formed, taking the example of the mother organization the CNT. Anyway, the group did not cut loose totally from the CNT. Women of Mujeres Libres invited their male counterparts of the CNT to their congresses.<sup>154</sup> On the international front, the National Federation of Mujeres Libres established sections in different countries. These were in England, Holland, France, Switzerland, Czechoslovakia, Belgium, Poland, Argentina, and the USA.<sup>155</sup> Emma Goldman was the official representative of the CNT in London, editing the *SIA Bulletin* in English.

The magazine *Mujeres Libres* was published in 13 issues from 1936 through 1938. The most critical issues concerning the empowerment of women in the matters of woman and child welfare were covered in the 1937 issues. The reason for this was that Mujeres Libres started to coordinate with anarchist Ministers in defining its agenda. On November 4, 1936, under the Socialist Prime Minister Francisco Largo Caballero, Federica Montseny became the Minister of Health; Juan García Oliver, Minister of Justice; Juan López, Minister of Commerce, and Juan Peíro, Minister of Industry.<sup>156</sup> Under Federica Montseny, Dr. Amparo Poch, the co-founder of Mujeres

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<sup>154</sup> Ackelsberg, 148-149.

<sup>155</sup> Mary Nash, ed., "localización de las agrupaciones de Mujeres Libres," appendix to *"Mujeres Libres": España 1936-1939*, (Barcelona: Tusquets Editor, 1975).

<sup>156</sup> David Porter, ed., *Vision On Fire: Emma Goldman on the Spanish Revolution*, (California: AK Press, 2006), 135.



Libres, became the director of Social Assistance, and free-lover anarchist Dr. Félix Martí Ibáñez became the director general of Health and Social Assistance.<sup>157</sup>

Under their leadership, parallel to the war exigencies, *Mujeres Libres* deemed such issues as hygiene, child care, and the education of women in sexual matters important. The nursing school and the maternity hospital “Louise Michel” [named after the French anarchist Louise Michel (1830-1905)] both founded by *Mujeres Libres* in Barcelona drew mothers’ attention to medical care and offered “consciousness-raising” classes for them. The group also began a campaign to favor breast-feeding.<sup>158</sup> Leading all these activities, Dr. Amparo Poch, the co-founder of *Mujeres Libres*, travelled to various women’s collectives to teach first aid and train women in midwifery.<sup>159</sup> The magazine *Mujeres Libres* also became a very practical medium of empowering women in these areas. Dr. Amparo Poch in the 1937 issues wrote a serialized article on puericulture entitled “Niño” [Child] which showed mothers how to care for their children from infancy to early childhood. This article had the following sections: “El recién nacido” [the new-born], “El niño sano” [healthy child], “El niño, crece” [the growing child], and “La primera infancia” [early childhood].<sup>160</sup>

A child properly cared for would make a better person for the new anarchist society to be founded after the anti-fascist struggle. Thus, as Federica Montseny said in her pamphlet *El problema de los sexos*, written in 1943, “This meant that the

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<sup>157</sup> Mary Nash, *Defying Male Civilization: Women in the Spanish Civil War*, (Colorado: Arden Press, 1995), 146.

<sup>158</sup> “*Mujeres Libres* mostró una gran preocupación por la educación de las madres acerca del cuidado infantil. La casa de Maternidad de la organización en Barcelona ofrecía atención médica y clases de maternidad consciente y realizó una campaña a favor de la lactancia natural.” In Ackelsberg, 196-201.

<sup>159</sup> Temma Kaplan, “Spanish Anarchism and Women’s Liberation,” *Journal of Contemporary History* 6-2, (1971): 101-110, 107.

<sup>160</sup> Mary Nash, ed., “*Mujeres Libres*”: *España 1936-1939*, (Barcelona: Tusquets Editor, 1975), 205-225.

mother had to be educated to the maximum of her potential in order to be able to provide the best for the child.”<sup>161</sup> Although they denounced marriage, anarcho-feminists saw maternity as a right and duty. As Montseny wrote in *La Revista Blanca* in 1928, “One must live by the ethic of love as art; the ethic of maternity as a right, and maternity as a duty.”<sup>162</sup> Although Emma Goldman did not have a child, as she had an inverted womb, she had the same line of thinking with Montseny about motherhood. In her essay “Marriage and Love” which appeared in *Anarchism and Other Essays* (1910), she wrote, “If a woman becomes a mother, it is to the child the deepest and best her being can yield. To grow with the child is her motto; she knows that in that matter alone can she help build true manhood and womanhood.”<sup>163</sup>

Goldman’s phrase “to grow with the child” would become deeply ingrained in *Mujeres Libres*’ rhetoric of motherhood, too. As Etta Federn of *Mujeres Libres* wrote in *Mujeres Libres* number 12, “Educated mothers relate their own experiences and sufferings to their children; they intuitively understand their feelings and expressions. They are good educators, as they are also friends of the children they educate.”<sup>164</sup> Mothers were called on to share their experiences with their children, thus contributing to their development. Also, this friendly approach of mothers towards their children defied parental authority inherent in the Spanish family pattern. Thus, the child raised with maternal care and affection, free from restrictive

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<sup>161</sup> Federica Montseny, *El problema de los sexos*, (Toulouse: Universo, 1943). In Shirley F. Fredricks, “Social And Political Thought of Federica Montseny, Spanish Anarchist 1923-1937” (PhD diss., University of New Mexico, 1972), 144.

<sup>162</sup> Federica Montseny, “Bajo el signo de Afrodita,” *La Revista Blanca*, Sep 1, 1928. Ibid., 142.

<sup>163</sup> Emma Goldman, “Marriage and Love,” in Alix Kates Shulman, ed., *Red Emma Speaks: An Emma Goldman Reader*, (New York: Humanity Books, 1998), 212-213.

<sup>164</sup> “Mujeres conscientes dan cuenta de sus propias experiencias y sufrimientos, también intuitivamente comprenden y adivinan las sensaciones e impresiones de sus hijos. Son buenas educadoras, porque son amigas de los niños a quienes educan.” Etta Federn, “Maternidad y maternidad,” *Mujeres Libres* 12, qtd. in Nash, “*Mujeres Libres*,” 173.

family boundaries, would make a better qualified person for the new anarchist society to be founded after the anti-fascist struggle.

Goldman saw woman's privilege in "her nature fulfilling life's greatest treasure, love for a man, or her most glorious, the right to give birth to a child."<sup>165</sup> In the anarcho-feminist thought, mothers were to be qualified to fulfill their roles as molders of the young and architects of the future. As Bonnie Dark Haaland asserts in her doctoral dissertation on Goldman, "In spite of her view of freedom, Goldman grounded women's definition and meaning, not within a general and wide range of possibilities and potentialities, but in specific and narrow options - that of heterosexual love and child-bearing."<sup>166</sup> In the anarchist thought, children were very important, as they would sustain the continuity of the anarchist society. Thus, the duties of a mother were to ensure the raising of a future-person along the anarchist lines.

Goldman and Mujeres Libres favored the idea of having children, but they did not see marriage as a duty for it. They replaced marriage with the concept of free-love [polygamy without legal barriers]. Goldman and the co-founders of Mujeres Libres practiced this in their private lives. As Linda Gordon, historian of American birth-control movement, suggests, "The free-lovers were equally pro-motherhood; they only wanted to separate motherhood from legal marriage. They devised pro-motherhood arguments to bolster their case against marriage. Mismatched couples, held together by marriage laws, made bad parents and produced inferior offspring."<sup>167</sup>

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<sup>165</sup> Emma Goldman, "Marriage and Love," in Shulman, 212-213.

<sup>166</sup> Bonnie Dark Haaland, "Sexuality, Reproduction and Anarchy: Emma Goldman and the Impurity of the State" (PhD diss., University of Toronto, 1992), 89. Also see Haaland, *Emma Goldman: Sexuality and the Impurity of the State*, (Montreal: Black Rose Books, 1993).

<sup>167</sup> Linda Gordon, *Woman's Body, Woman's Right: A Social History of Birth Control in America*, (Middlesex: Penguin Books, 1990), 110.

In this connection, Goldman argued that free-motherhood promised a brighter future for children. In her essay “Marriage and Love” published in 1910 she said,

So long as love begets life no child is deserted, or hungry, or famished for the want of affection. I know this to be true. I know women who became mothers in freedom by the men they loved. Few children in wedlock enjoy the care, the protection, and the devotion free motherhood is capable of bestowing.<sup>168</sup>

Goldman and *Mujeres Libres* saw love sufficient to have a child. They denounced having child in wedlock, as women became dependent on men. Such mothers were not likely to raise free and self-determined children. Federica Montseny, like Goldman, “deemed a woman happy if she loved whom she wished and who had children with the men she desired to have children with, and in the moment in which her being demanded the enjoyments and responsibilities of happy and free maternity.”<sup>169</sup>

In parallel with this bifurcation in view of marriage and having a child, as advocated by Goldman and *Mujeres Libres*, in the 1937 issues of *Mujeres Libres*, articles critical of marriage began to appear. *Mujeres Libres* number 7, for example, suggested “the proposal for the creation of a marriage factory” instead of the official marriage at the Church. This proposal ridiculed the idea of marriage in the first place: “Comrade Revolution has made us aware of his great affliction. People continue to marry.... In the face of this inescapable reality, we attempt to alleviate some of its inevitable consequences. People continue loving the modes of their oppression. At the least, let us see if we can lighten the chains.”<sup>170</sup>

As Sara Berenguer of *Mujeres Libres* recalled, there were many members who rejected official marriage and asked the group leaders to marry them. However,

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<sup>168</sup> Emma Goldman, “Marriage and Love,” in Shulman, 212.

<sup>169</sup> Federica Montseny, “Una Vida de Mujer,” *La Revista Blanca*, Aug 15, 1928. In Fredricks, 137.

<sup>170</sup> “Proyecto para la creación de una fábrica de bodas en serie,” *Mujeres Libres*, (1937), no 7. In Ackelsberg, 185.

the co-founder of *Mujeres Libres*, Lucía Sánchez Saornil denounced this kind of practice. She said in her 1936 article “The Marriage Ceremony or Spiritual Cowardice”: “If we spent all those years asserting that the free consent of both parties is sufficient for union between them, and that a wedding certificate was nothing other than a contract of sale, how can we explain these absurd ceremonies in union organizations?”<sup>171</sup>

Federica Montseny also saw marriage as antithetical to love. She wrote in *La Revista Blanca* in 1927, “It has been said over and over that the greatest enemy of love is matrimony. Matrimony is the death-bed of love.... After all, a woman should recognize that marriage is hazardous for her.”<sup>172</sup> Goldman had also criticized this institution. She said in her essay “Marriage and Love”, “The institution of marriage makes a parasite of woman, an absolute dependent. It incapacitates her for life’s struggle.”<sup>173</sup> Neither Montseny nor Goldman mentioned these words without empathy with ordinary married women. They also knew what marriage was. Even though both Montseny and Goldman married their comrades, they might have felt bored by limitations imposed on them by rules inherent in marriage. They were two leading women in their fields, and they wanted to act independently. They wanted to depend on themselves, not on their husbands.

When marriage was eliminated, women’s dependence on men would also be done with. Then, women would need to be self-supporting. Thus, anarcho-feminists’ call for voluntary motherhood was also likely to be realized only when mothers were

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<sup>171</sup> Lucía Sánchez Saornil, “La ceremonia matrimonial o la cobardía del espíritu,” *Horas de revolución*, (1936), 24-26. In Ackelsberg, 135.

<sup>172</sup> “Se ha dicho y repetido que el mayor adversaria del amor es el matrimonio. El matrimonio es la tumba del amor.... Ante todo, la mujer debe convencerse de que el matrimonio es perjudicial para ella.” In Federica Montseny, “La mujer, problema del hombre,” *La Revista Blanca*, Apr 15, 1927. In Fredricks, 283-289.

<sup>173</sup> Emma Goldman, “Marriage and Love,” in Shulman, 211.

economically independent. Goldman in her essay “Victims of Morality”, which was published in 1910, wrote: “With the economic war raging all around her, with strife, misery, crime, disease, and insanity staring her in the face, with numberless little children ground into gold dust, how can the self-and-race-conscious woman become a mother?”<sup>174</sup>

Federica Montseny also mentioned the necessity of favorable economic conditions for voluntary motherhood. She wrote in *La Revista Blanca* in 1935, “Only when a woman desired a child and when her nature and economic potential was favorable to it, she should have one. These factors should also determine how many children a woman should have.”<sup>175</sup> Putting these words into practice, Montseny, in December 1936, legalized abortion. By February 1937, abortion services had been established in four medical centers in Barcelona and Catalonia. In fact, abortion was not entirely well-received among the anarchist milieu. As Mary Nash, historian of Spanish women, suggests,

Anarchist politics of reproduction had not historically focused on abortion but rather on birth control. Abortion was always peripheral to anarchist sex reform and policy on sexual education and birth control. They felt that informed educational policies on birth control would lead to the elimination of the need for abortion, so they concentrated on the diffusion of birth-control information.... Despite the fact that abortion was permitted on neo-malthusian voluntary restriction of the number of children, the new legislation did not classify abortion as a substitution for birth control. On the contrary, the policy focused on the actual elimination of the practice of abortion through the increased use of effective birth-control techniques.<sup>176</sup>

Emma Goldman also denounced women’s having recourse to abortion. She recalled,

Many women called for that purpose [abortion] even going down on their knees and begging me to help them, “for the sake of the poor little ones already here”.... I tried to explain to them that it was not the monetary

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<sup>174</sup> Emma Goldman, “Victims of Morality,” in Shulman, 174.

<sup>175</sup> Federica Montseny, “Dos palabras sobre la vasectomia,” *La Revista Blanca*, Nov 29, 1935. In Fredricks, 143.

<sup>176</sup> Nash, *Defying Male Civilization*, 168-175.

considerations that held me back; it was the concern for their life and health.<sup>177</sup>

In the anarchist thought, the inherent dignity and worth of the individual was very important. Thus, Goldman did not want to risk these women's lives through unsafe practice of abortion. According to Mary Nash, *Mujeres Libres* did not see abortion as a priority, either.<sup>178</sup> They wanted to ameliorate this concern of women through collective action. Thus, in the face of demands to limit the number of children of working-class people in America and Spain, they tried to provide birth-control methods for women. Educating them in this respect was crucial.

*Mujeres Libres* took on itself this task. The group gave information on sexuality and encouraged women to attend educational programs and hospital services. These programs offered classes on eugenics, contraception, sexuality, and procreation. The group also initiated talks and sessions on these subjects. The medical doctor Amparo Poch, the co-founder of *Mujeres Libres*, was the initiator of most of these activities. She founded a group called "Ogino", [contraceptive menstrual rhythm method] dedicated to the delivery of contraceptives.<sup>179</sup> The group's magazine *Mujeres Libres* also kept track of these recent developments. Many articles on sexuality and birth control appeared in the 1937 issues. To cite a few of them; "La vida sexual de la mujer" [the sexual life of the woman], "Fiestecitas que no deben propagarse" [Happy are those who do not have to procreate]; and "El problema sexual y la revolución" [The sexual problem and the revolution].<sup>180</sup>

The main thrust of the birth-control movement initiated by *Mujeres Libres* lay in neo-malthusian thinking. It stipulated that for the working-class people to have a

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<sup>177</sup> Emma Goldman, *Living My Life*, volume 1, (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1970), 186.

<sup>178</sup> Nash, *Defying Male Civilization*, 168-175.

<sup>179</sup> Antonina Rodrigo, *Una mujer libre, Amparo Poch y Gascón, médica y anarquista*, (Barcelona: Flor del Viento Ediciones, 2002), 46.

<sup>180</sup> Nash, *Defying Male Civilization*, 168-175.

better quality of life, parents should have children considering their financial situation. If this way of thinking was unheeded, numerous [*hijos sin cuento*] children and parents would suffer; thus children would prove featureless and parasitic individuals to the society. This eugenic argument earlier was deeply embedded in Emma Goldman's rhetoric. She said in "Marriage and Love" published in 1910,

Woman no longer wants to be a party the production of a race of sickly, feeble, decrepit, and wretched human beings, who have neither the strength nor moral courage to throw off the yoke of poverty and slavery. Instead, she desires fewer and better children; not by compulsion as marriage imposes.... Rather would she forego forever the glory of motherhood than bring forth life in an atmosphere that breathes only destruction and death.<sup>181</sup>

By such words as "sickly, feeble, decepit, and wretched human beings", Goldman stated her eugenic argument. Children, born into unfavorable conditions and unenthusiastic mothers had every likelihood to burden the family, especially their mothers. In the Spanish case also, the abortion legislation developed out of these considerations. As Mary Nash suggests, the abortion legislation in Spain was based on the eugenic reason which constituted the main thrust of the politics of abortion initiated by the anarchist health authorities.<sup>182</sup> For example, this same tone of eugenic argument was also evident in Federica Montseny's writing. In her pamphlet *El problema de los sexos*, written in 1943, she stated:

Women were semi-literate, bred for the hearth, to serve the priests, to be sacred ones of God. An ignorant woman, obtuse, closed to progress, a woman who will transmit to the children all her prejudices and superstitions.... And this, being a slave; and this maintained in the ignorance of a beast of the field or as an incubation machine for sons. And, as is natural, slaves create slaves, a brutalized person creates a brutalized person.<sup>183</sup>

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<sup>181</sup> Emma Goldman, "Marriage and Love," in Shulman, 212.

<sup>182</sup> Nash, *Defying Male Civilization*, 169-170.

<sup>183</sup> Federica Montseny, *El problema de los sexos*, (Toulouse: Universo, 1943), 21-23. In Fredricks, 144.



By referring to “prejudices and superstitions”, Montseny, like Goldman, saw the Spanish women under the yoke of the Church and the patriarchal society. Like Goldman, she defined these women as slaves who would pass on their ignorance and unprogressiveness to their children. Goldman, in her 1935 letter to her friend Max Nettlau, called on the backwardness of Spanish women who did it limit the number of their children. She wrote: “I wish to say that I have yet to meet the woman who wants to have many children... Unless she is densely ignorant with an exaggerated trait of passivity, she wants only as many as children as she can decide to have, and I am sure the Spanish woman makes no exception.”<sup>184</sup>

To avoid Spanish women’s living in this “densely ignorant” state and “passivity”, Mujeres Libres, in coordination with the Ministry of Health, offered sex education to women. As Martha Ackelsberg, historian of Mujeres Libres, suggests, women were taught in the areas of sex hygiene, the care of women during pregnancy, and confinement. Dr. Amparo Poch, the co-founder of Mujeres Libres, put much effort into this endeavor. She wrote many articles, educational pamphlets that discussed women’s sexuality, the importance of sexual expression for women, criticizing monogamy and the sexual double standard. She supported education about physiology, sexual pleasure, sexual functioning, and contraception. She wrote that due to social pressure and their husbands, women could not meet their bodily needs. However, according to Poch, women should be in easy reach of the information they

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<sup>184</sup> Emma Goldman to Max Nettlau, February 8, 1935. In Richard Drinnon and Anna Marie Drinnon, eds., *Nowhere At Home: Letters from Exile of Emma Goldman and Alexander Berkman*, (New York: Schocken Books, 1975), 134.

needed about their bodies, and sexuality so that they could fully develop.<sup>185</sup> Anarcho-feminists saw sex education as a necessity for the empowerment of women.

Sex education would provide women with sexual liberation in the new anarchist society. And this would bring about an egalitarian basis for the relationship between men and women. Anarchists' aim in this area was the following, "During much of the 1930's, the sexual question will awake a great curiosity and through an adequate sexual education will reach a complete sexual liberation, in which relations among human beings will develop in the optimum way."<sup>186</sup> Sexual liberation would eliminate "the double standard of morality" between man and woman. Women would be self-determined in questions related to her own body. They would not submit to the yoke of the Church and the patriarchal values in matters of child-bearing and child-raising.

As Susan L. Brown suggests in her book *The Politics of Individualism*,

Sex education was important to free women from being treated instrumentally as objects for the satisfaction of another's desires. Ignorance leads to domination and subordination, while knowledge and critical thinking prepares the individual for a free and creative life. This is especially true for women, who often suffer subordination because they are kept in a state of abject ignorance about their own bodies. Only free and open discussion of such matters can give to women the knowledge necessary for being self-determined individuals.<sup>187</sup>

Discussing sexual concerns of women openly was a kind of "direct action" on the part of *Mujeres Libres* under the direction of Federica Montseny and Dr. Amparo Poch. Spreading these anarchist doctrines among people through lecturing and mass-

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<sup>185</sup> Amparo Poch y Gascón, *La vida sexual de la mujer*, (Valencia: Cuadernos de Cultura, 1937), 22-31.; "La autoridad en el amor y en la sociedad," *Solidaridad Obrera*, Sep 27, 1935.; "La convivencia, antídoto del amor," *Solidaridad Obrera*, Dec 19, 1936. In Ackelsberg, 134.

<sup>186</sup> "A lo largo de los años treinta, la cuestión sexual despertaba una gran curiosidad y se estimaba que únicamente a través de una adecuada educación sexual podría llegarse a una completa libertad sexual, en la que las relaciones entre los seres humanos se desarrollaría de una manera óptima." In "A Modo de programa," *Estudios* 91, (June, 1931). Qtd. in Nash, "*Mujeres Libres*", 9.

<sup>187</sup> Susan L. Brown, *The Politics of Individualism: Liberalism, Liberal Feminism, and Anarchism*, (New York: Black Rose Books, 1993), 130.

publishing was not an uncommon sight for these women. Chapter I of this thesis underscored the fear of anarchists in the face of a growing population falling prey to capitalist ends. Emma Goldman, prompted by such fear, had helped Margaret Sanger to circulate birth-control information. In the Spanish case, likewise, *Mujeres Libres* took the lead among other women's organizations to educate women in this area, prompted by the fear that children uncared and unsufficiently trained would be hard to draw to the anarchist cause. Moreover, children born into involuntary motherhood would suck life out of their mothers, destroying their individuality and incapacitating them for the anti-fascist struggle. Federica Montseny, under whose Ministry *Mujeres Libres* offered women sex education, wrote a great deal about this issue. She said, "Women should be made responsible and educated enough to know her own physical state; hence able to control her pregnancy."<sup>188</sup>

It is noteworthy that through the application of birth control, not only working-class women's lives were to be ameliorated. The family unit would also be reinvigorated. Chapter I of this thesis revealed the rationale of American birth-controllers in employing this method to save the working-class families. Overlarge families were believed to harm the nuclear family, men as much as women. Spanish anarcho-feminists also adopted the same line of reasoning. According to Federica Montseny, when there were few children in a household, the labors of the family would be shared according to capability, needs, and individual preferences. Also, males would properly and enthusiastically fulfill their basic rights and duties to their children.<sup>189</sup> In short, children grown with motherly and fatherly affection, with a

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<sup>188</sup> Federica Montseny, "Dos palabras sobre la vasectomia," *La Revista Blanca*, Nov 29, 1935. In Fredricks, 143.

<sup>189</sup> Federica Montseny to Max Nettlau, Feb 22, 1936 and Jan 1, 1938. In Fredricks, 144.

proper training along the anarchist lines, would better qualify as future-persons of the new anarchist society which would be founded after the anti-fascist struggle.

Yet another reason to educate Spanish women in sexual matters, aside from teaching them birth-control methods, was to save them from prostitution. Emma Goldman through her article “The Traffic in Women”, published in 1910, had laid the basis of this argument earlier. She wrote:

It is a conceded fact that woman is being reared as a sex commodity, and yet she is kept in absolute ignorance of the meaning and importance of sex.... It is nevertheless true that so long as a girl is not to know how to care herself, not to know the function of the most important part of her life, we need not to be surprised if she becomes an easy prey to prostitution, or to any other form of a relationship which degrades her to the position of an object for mere sex gratification. It is due to this ignorance that the entire life and nature of the girl is thwarted and crippled.<sup>190</sup>

Goldman here advocated the need for raising young girls’ awareness of their own bodies. In this line, to avoid girls’ falling into prostitution, which stemmed from ignorance, Goldman along with her comrades had encouraged sex education for women and children. One example of this is evident in her co-founding in 1911 the Ferrer School in New York where children were given sex education.

According to Goldman, besides young girls’ ignorance in sexual matters, “the double standard of morality” of a society was another reason that brought about prostitution. She wrote in “The Traffic in Women”,

It would be one-sided and extremely superficial to maintain that the economic factor is the only factor of prostitution. There are others no less important and vital.... Society considers the sex experiences of a man as attributes of his general development, while similar experiences in the life of a woman are looked upon as a terrible calamity, a loss of honor.... This double standard of morality has played no little part in the creation and perpetuation of prostitution. It involves the keeping of the young in absolute ignorance on sex matters.... It is altogether the fault of society, the fault of our lack of

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<sup>190</sup> Emma Goldman, “The Traffic in Women,” in Shulman, 181.

understanding, which condemn a girl for all eternity, because she has gone from the path of virtue.<sup>191</sup>

Like Goldman, *Mujeres Libres* also took “the double standard of morality” as the central cause of prostitution. In fact, *Mujeres Libres* was the first Spanish women’s organization to take this view. As Mary Nash suggests, “*Mujeres Libres*, the most articulate and active women’s group fighting prostitution understood it to be a consequence of the double sexual standard that condoned premarital or extramarital sex for men while condemning it for women.”<sup>192</sup> The effort to eliminate prostitution during the Spanish Civil War was in fact an extension of *La Lucha Antivenérea* [The antivenereal campaign] initiated by the Minister of Health for the war exigencies. The aim of this campaign was to provide sanitary conditions, not eliminating prostitution. As a report prepared in June 3, 1937 by doctors of the Public Assistance service reads: “During the war, sanitation policies were not geared toward eliminating prostitution but toward controlling venereal disease.”<sup>193</sup> In 1937, the press put much effort into preventing prostitutes from visiting soldiers. They asserted that venereal diseases were as harmful as the bullets of the enemy. “Avoid venereal ills like bullets” was the slogan of the press and the war posters.<sup>194</sup>

In *Mujeres Libres*’ neo-malthusian program about sexual concerns, the elimination of prostitution occupied an important place. The aim of the program was “to facilitate simple and efficient methods of birth control; to facilitate anti-venereal methods; to eliminate prostitution; to raise conscious parents to educate the child in sexual matters; to throw off restrictive ideological conditions; to obtain the right to access to doctor for abortion; and to secure the right to free abortion and adequately

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<sup>191</sup> *Ibid.*, 181-183.

<sup>192</sup> Nash, *Defying Male Civilization*, 159.

<sup>193</sup> “Las casas de lenocinio de este ciudad y de sus derivaciones para la salud publica,” *Ibid.*, 156.

<sup>194</sup> Isabel Romero, “La prostitución ante la guerra. Un peligro que hay que atajar rapidamente,” *Castilla Libre* 2, (March 2, 1937); “Prostitución, vergonya del mon,” *Companya*, (March 4, 1937); “La Prostitución el enemigo principal de la Quinta Columna,” *Claridad*, (March 4, 1937). *Ibid.*

sanitary conditions during its practice.”<sup>195</sup> *Mujeres Libres* empowered Spanish women in sexual concerns through this agenda. However, this empowerment of women sexually would also need to be complemented by efforts to make women socially and culturally self-sufficient.

As Mary Nash suggests, “Other women’s organizations, such as the anti-fascist women’s groups, also came to consider the combat against prostitution as a fight for women’s liberation and paid some sporadic attention to it, but it was *Mujeres Libres* that gave the issue priority on its agenda.”<sup>196</sup> This fact was the result of *Mujeres Libres*’ enjoying the support of high-ranking officials in the Ministry of Health and Social Assistance under Federica Montseny. Dr. Amparo Poch, the co-founder of *Mujeres Libres*, was the director of Social Assistance, and free-lover anarchist Dr. Félix Martí Ibáñez, who, in 1937, wrote a serialized article entitled “La abolición del amor mercenario” [The abolition of prostitution] in the anarchist periodical *Estudios*, was the general of Health and Social Assistance. They underscored the importance of elimination of prostitution for women’s own sake.

In this endeavor, *Mujeres Libres* created *Liberatorios de prostitución* [liberation homes for prostitutes] in 1937. Accordingly, in the magazine *Mujeres Libres*, a serial of articles entitled “Liberatorios de prostitución” began to appear in the 1937 issues. As Mary Nash suggests,

These liberation homes were designed as a transitory stage in the “social readaptation” of prostitutes to a “new life, society, and work”. These homes

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<sup>195</sup> “facilitar medios simples y eficaces de control de natalidad; facilitar medios de prevención de enfermedades venéreas; eliminar la prostitución; crear la paternidad y maternidad conscientes; educar sexualmente al niño; superar los condicionamientos ideológicos represivos; derecho del médico para practicar el aborto; derecho de toda mujer al aborto gratuito y realizable en condiciones sanitarias adecuadas.” In Aurora Morcillo Cómez, “Feminismo y lucha política durante la II República y la Guerra Civil,” qtd. in Pilar Folguera, ed., *El Feminismo en España: Dos siglos de historia*, (Madrid: Pablo Iglesias, 2007), 116.

<sup>196</sup> Nash, *Defying Male Civilization*, 163.

were rehabilitation homes where the “mercenaries of love” were to be given a comprehensive treatment consisting of health care, psychotherapy, and professional training centered on apprenticeship in trades.<sup>197</sup>

Mujeres Libres saw prostitutes as the victims of “the double standard of morality” and treated them as they treated ordinary working-class women. In order for prostitutes to make a fresh beginning, Mujeres Libres endeavored to empower them by helping them to learn a skill which would ensure a living. Thus, they would be able to be self-supporting and self-sufficient.

Emma Goldman, in her essay “The Traffic in Women”, published in 1910, suggested, “As to a thorough eradication of prostitution, nothing can accomplish that save a complete transvaluation of all accepted values – especially the moral ones – coupled with the abolition of industrial slavery.”<sup>198</sup> In this line, Mujeres Libres imagined that as there would be no room for the “double standard of morality” and unfavorable economic conditions for self-supporting women in the new Spanish anarchist society, women would not fall prey to prostitution.

This chapter explored the similarities in the rhetorics of Emma Goldman and Mujeres Libres related to the themes that appeared in the group’s agenda and its magazine *Mujeres Libres* in the year 1937. In June 1937, Goldman was assigned as the delegate of the newly founded National Federation of Mujeres Libres, and also as the representative of *Mujeres Libres* in Europe and the USA. Thus, Goldman came to represent, advocate, and propagandize what the group’s magazine called for in the issues of marriage, education of mothers, free-love, birth-control, voluntary motherhood, and the elimination of prostitution. The striking similarities between Mujeres Libres’ rhetoric and vocabulary and Goldman’s earlier writings show that

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<sup>197</sup> Ibid.

<sup>198</sup> Emma Goldman, “The Traffic in Women,” in Shulman, 189.

Goldman, as in the initial stages of her involvement with Mujeres Libres, continued to be a guide to the group. Mujeres Libres, thus, kept deriving much of its energy and inspiration from Goldman. This solidarity would be further reinforced in 1938 when the Spanish refugee problem could no longer be avoided.



## CHAPTER V

### THE ANARCHO-FEMINISTS' TIRELESS EFFORTS AS REFLECTED IN THE SPANISH REFUGEES' CASE, 1938-1939

*Anarchists might use such a respected libertarian as the American exile Emma Goldman to lead their foreign propaganda efforts or aid drives, but there were few like her.*<sup>199</sup>

This chapter will look at the years 1938-1939 in which Emma Goldman, as the official representative of the CNT [National Confederation of Labor] at the London section of the SIA [International Anti-Fascist Solidarity], collaborated with the co-founders of Mujeres Libres in helping the Spanish refugees. Goldman took the lead in arranging exhibitions and film shows. She published a joint bulletin of Mujeres Libres and the SIA to raise funds and make propaganda work for the Spanish refugees. She also sent clothing and food for the Spanish refugees and acted as an intermediary in refugee children's adoptions by anarchist couples. To be of more help to her Spanish comrades, Goldman planned to extend her activities to

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<sup>199</sup> Robert W. Kern, *Red Years-Black Years: A Political History of Spanish Anarchism 1911-1937*, (Pennsylvania: ISHI, 1978), 189.

Canada and America. Thus, Goldman brought forth her anarcho-feminist solidarity into the international platform, although she could not enter America, and her trip to Canada was delayed until April, 1939. In February 1939, *Mujeres Libres* was dissolved, and Franco's troops defeated the Republican side in April 1939. A half million anarchist Spaniards were in exile in other European countries. The co-founders of *Mujeres Libres* were in exile in France. However, against these odds, Goldman, who was in London, continued to be a resourceful guide and aide to her Spanish comrades through her propaganda and fund-raising activities.

In 1937, Emma Goldman had opened the London section of the SIA. The SIA was founded by Spanish anarchists in 1937 to provide direct relief support for women and children refugees of the war. In Spain alone, the SIA had 100,000 members. Its sections were in France, the USA, Holland, Sweden, and England.<sup>200</sup> According to Dorothy Legarreta, the author of *The Guernica Generation*, at the beginning of the Spanish Civil War, approximately 120,000 people were evacuated from the war zones, 30,000 of whom were children of under fourteen years of age.<sup>201</sup> *Mujeres Libres* in Spain helped these refugees, collaborating with the SIA, the General Secretary of which was Lucía Sánchez Saornil, the co-founder of *Mujeres Libres*.

In early 1938, Goldman started to make arrangements for a *Mujeres Libres* exhibition in London. The money raised from this exhibition would be channelled into *Mujeres Libres* for financial support which would in turn be used to aid

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<sup>200</sup> David Porter, ed., *Vision On Fire: Emma Goldman on the Spanish Revolution*, (California: AK Press, 2006), 93-207.

<sup>201</sup> Dorothy Legarreta, *The Guernica Generation: Basque Refugee Children of the Spanish Civil War*, (Nevada: University of Nevada Press, 1984), 50.

refugees. Mercedes Comaposada, the co-founder of *Mujeres Libres*, expressed their gratitude to Goldman for such a plan. She wrote in French:

You always work for our cause with a magnificent enthusiasm and your usual hard work. We have been told that you have the smart project of organizing a *Mujeres Libres* exhibition on your mind. We are enchanted with this idea and we have taken on the task of preparing the best materials we can gather.... We would re-use these materials to repeat your exhibition in different places, in Spain and some other places.<sup>202</sup>

This propaganda work on the part of Goldman, as seen, was well-received by *Mujeres Libres*. Here, it is noteworthy that Goldman initiated such a plan on her own. She just asked for help in the procurement of the necessary materials. This shows that Goldman now acted independently of *Mujeres Libres* in the cause of the latter. *Mujeres Libres*, lacking money and dealing with the refugee problem, could hardly spare its energy for propaganda work. Thus, Goldman took the lead, and worked on the group's behalf. This effort of Goldman, as displayed in her arranging an exhibition, did not go unnoticed in the group's magazine. The news in *Mujeres Libres* number 12 read:

In England, thanks to our comrade Emma Goldman's support in making all our struggle's highlights known, our efforts are given credit. In a variety of anti-fascist periodicals, articles of our magazine are reproduced, and with Emma Goldman's endeavors in this field, a "*Mujeres Libres* exhibition" is being prepared.<sup>203</sup>

Goldman aimed to raise money for the group by attracting people's attention to its activities. Also, through the sales of the *Mujeres Libres*' materials, she introduced

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<sup>202</sup> "Tu travailles toujours par notre cause avec l'enthousiasme magnifique et l'activité qui te sont habituels. Elle nous a appris aussi que tu as le beau projet d'organiser une exposition *Mujeres Libres*. Nous en sommes enchantées et nous nous donnons déjà a la tâche de préparer tout le meilleur matériel que nous pouvons reunir.... Nous voudrions profiter ce matériel pour répéter leur exhibition a divers lieux, en Espagne et en dehors." Mercedes Comaposada to Emma Goldman, February 11, 1938; microfilm, reel 42, EG Papers Project, University of Berkeley, California.

<sup>203</sup> "En Inglaterra, gracias especialmente al apoyo de nuestra Emma Goldman en dar a conocer todas las manifestaciones positivas de nuestra lucha, se estima y se estimula nuestro esfuerzo, se reproducen, en diversos periódicos antifascistas, artículos de nuestra revista y se prepara, también con la intervención directa de Emma Goldman una 'Exposición *Mujeres Libres*,'" *Mujeres Libres* 12, (1938), Syracuse, New York edition, 33.

this anarcho-feminist group to the British people. She led the way in making its arguments heard, carrying their anarcho-feminist solidarity onto the international platform. In her June 7, 1938 letter to Lucía Sánchez Saornil, the co-founder of Mujeres Libres and the General Secretary of the SIA, she mentioned her plan to make a new exhibition, this time, in Canada when she would be there. In this letter written in English, she said: “When I go to Canada, I will take along whatever material I have of the Mujeres Libres and I will organize an exhibition there.”<sup>204</sup>

Goldman arranged more exhibitions in the meantime. But, unfortunately, little money was collected at these exhibitions. As Goldman wrote in the same letter of June 7, 1938:

Our exhibitions have not met with much response while the expenses were considerable.... The returns were not even half.... My only consolation was that I am trying with all my strength and thought to rouse the British workers and to make them see the truly great contribution Mujeres Libres was making to the struggle of freedom for the whole world.<sup>205</sup>

Goldman underscored the importance of making propaganda work to rouse the interest of the British workers. She wanted to reinforce the network of anarchist workers worldwide for the Spanish cause. The reason why Goldman wanted to involve with British workers was that in London, she was in close touch with the Independent Labor Party. This British party was in collaboration with the Spanish Leftist Communist “POUM” [Workers’ Party of Marxist Unification]. Also, Goldman’s British associate, Ethel Mannin served as the treasurer of the London section of the SIA and also as a member of the Independent Labor Party.<sup>206</sup> Thus, within this wide network of leftists and anarchists in which members of one party affiliated themselves with another, more activities were arranged to help the

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<sup>204</sup> Emma Goldman to Lucía Sánchez Saornil, June 7, 1938. Reel 43.

<sup>205</sup> Ibid.

<sup>206</sup> Porter, 8.

refugees. The Independent Labor Party offered much help in the issue of the Spanish refugees. Goldman in her June 4, 1938 letter wrote that 41 children were under the care of this party.<sup>207</sup> She knew that anarchists had the habit of rushing to aid their comrades, thus she reinforced her ties with anarchist workers to ensure their help for the Spanish refugees.

Most of the refugee children were the offspring of anarchist members of the CNT-FAI. They were also concentrated in other European countries such as Poland, France, Belgium, Soviet Russia, and England where the SIA had already been well-established. In these countries, refugee children were given schooling; some of them were adopted by new families. Besides those outside of Spain, there were thousands of refugees in Spain. As Mary Nash suggests, in Spain, refugees were concentrated in the Catalan region. The Generalitat estimated that there were more than one million refugees in Catalonia, a quarter of whom were children. Those who were evacuated from Malaga, Madrid, Asturias, and the Basque country moved into Murcia, Valencia, and Catalonia.<sup>208</sup>

Finding relief for one million refugees proved a hard-to-achieve task. In a devastated country where the number of refugees escaping the terror of Franco kept skyrocketing, regional and national support was no longer enough. Thus, the refugee problem of Spain at the peak of the war needed to draw international attention. That was why, the SIA, acting like the Red Cross, established sections in different parts of the world. As Sara Berenguer of Mujeres Libres wrote in her autobiography *Entre el sol y la tormenta* (2004),

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<sup>207</sup> Emma Goldman to Lucía Sánchez Saornil, June 4, 1938. Reel 43.

<sup>208</sup> Mary Nash, *Defying Male Civilization: Women in the Spanish Civil War*, (Colorado: Arden Press, 1995), 146.

The SIA was not formed only in Europe, but also in America. In America, it was specifically located in Gary, Indiana and California. All of its efforts were put into supporting soldiers of the Republican Spain.... Emma Goldman continued to realize an immense amount of solidarity work in the SIA in favor of the Spanish refugees exiled in France and Latin America, through the periodical *Cultura proletaria de Nueva York* [The Cultural Proletarian of New York].<sup>209</sup>

Goldman, as was her way, kept reinforcing the anarchist network through mass publishing. She most probably wrote in *Cultura proletaria de Nuevo York*, the anarchist periodical published in New York, to solicit help for the Spanish refugees. The scale and scope of this anarchist network in America constitutes a gap in historiography; only piecemeal information is accessible through the magazine *Mujeres Libres* number 12 in which it was mentioned that “Los comités femeninos Unidos de Nueva York” and the Spanish club “Antorcha” [Torch] made donations to *Mujeres Libres*.<sup>210</sup>

Goldman got involved with these tasks in favor of the Spanish refugees through her comrades. “Mutual aid” and “collective action” were vital elements in the anarchist comradeship, thus many times, she turned to them for help. Her planned trip to America, besides Canada, also depended on her comrades’ procurement of a visa for her. Goldman, if she could realize her trips, would appeal to Canadian and American anarchist workers. In her June 7, 1938 letter, she wrote to Lucía Sánchez Saornil in English:

I think I might be able to do much to rouse the interest in your struggle of the Canadian workers, especially if I should succeed in going as far west as British Columbia, the most important industrial part of Canada. In addition, friends in America are working for a visa for me to re-enter the USA. If they

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<sup>209</sup> “SIA no se organizó en Europa, sino también en distintos puntos de América, en especial en Gary, Indiana y California. Todas sus acciones fueron de un gran apoyo para los combatientes de la España Republicana.... Emma Goldman continuó realizando una inmensa labor de solidaridad en SIA, a través del periodico *Cultura proletaria de Nueva York*, en favor de los refugiados españoles exiliados en Francia y América Latina.” Sara Berenguer, *Entre el sol y la tormenta: revolución, guerra y exilio de una mujer libre*, (Valencia: L’Eixam Ediciones, 2004), 191-192.

<sup>210</sup> *Mujeres Libres* 12, (1938), 33.

succeed, I will really be in a position to do much for your struggle, the SIA included.<sup>211</sup>

Goldman could not enter America, and her trip to Canada was delayed. In the meantime, she kept working to raise money for the Spanish refugees through exhibitions, contributions, and concerts. At some points, her efforts for *Mujeres Libres* and the SIA overlapped. For instance, in her June 4, 1938 letter, Goldman thanked Lucía Sánchez Saornil for the materials she sent for a “combination bulletin for the SIA and *Mujeres Libres*”<sup>212</sup> to be published by Goldman. Saornil appreciated this effort of Goldman in her December 20, 1938 letter by saying in English: “We expect much from your bulletin and this time, not only as a means of propaganda in England, but also the service it can do in Australia and in China.”<sup>213</sup>

The sphere of influence into which Goldman and the SIA wanted to assert their propaganda works transcended the boundaries of Spain and even Europe. They wanted to draw the attention of people in every corner of the world from Australia to China, seeing that refugees overflowed from the war zones. Economic pressures forced the SIA to work out a more effective propaganda work, as the small local funds they depended on were not a cure for the maintenance of refugees. In each of her letters, Goldman gave account of her expenditures and the money she raised through donations and exhibitions.

Although the SIA enjoyed the sponsorship of an international body of people, it was always in need of increased propaganda work and financial support. In moral support, there were famous figures who contributed to this organization.<sup>214</sup> Dr. Havelock Ellis, the British sexologist was one of them. Goldman had devoured his

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<sup>211</sup> Emma Goldman to Lucía Sánchez Saornil, June 7, 1938. Reel 43.

<sup>212</sup> Emma Goldman to Lucía Sánchez Saornil, June 4, 1938. Reel 43.

<sup>213</sup> Lucía Sánchez Saornil to Emma Goldman, December 20, 1938. Reel 69.

<sup>214</sup> Emma Goldman to Lucía Sánchez Saornil, December 6, 1938. Reel 69.

books while she was being trained as a nurse in Europe. She referred to his arguments many times in her articles. Another famous figure who appeared as a sponsor was the British novelist and journalist George Orwell. Orwell went to Spain during the Spanish Civil War and collected his observations in his book *Homage to Catalonia* (1938), a widely known work in Spanish Civil-War historiography. Yet another sponsor was the British feminist author and travel writer Miss Rebecca West, a friend of Emma Goldman.

Emma Goldman, on the other hand, besides her task as the official secretary of the CNT at the London section of the SIA, was also given the title of the honorary secretary of the SIA. In the name of propaganda work, besides arranging exhibitions, concerts, and collections, from mid-1938 on, Goldman found a new avenue for fundraising. She would collect money through film shows. In her August 12, 1938 letter to Lucía Sánchez Saornil, she wrote in Spanish: “To meet the current expenses of the SIA, we will make use of a small fund we have since last year, raised from the film ‘Fury over Spain’.”<sup>215</sup> Film shows would serve to draw people’s attention to the refugee problem in Spain, urging them to condemn the fascist policies of Franco. People would also respond to this refugee problem by offering relief in the form of donations, contributions, and sending relief packets. The exhibitions Goldman arranged had not produced the intended results, but this time she was hopeful that film shows would have a more direct effect. She asked for more films from Lucía Sánchez Saornil in her December 6, 1938 letter. She wrote in French:

I want to know if you can do something about the films you sent to me. I mean the ones of 16mm. I think you could make copies of them for the

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<sup>215</sup> “Para atender a los gastos corrientes de la SIA, haremos uso de un pequeño fondo en nuestro poder desde el año pasada, producido por la película ‘Furia sobre España’.” Emma Goldman to Lucía Sánchez Saornil, August 12, 1938. Reel 44.



English section in London.... This will help Ethel Mannin [the treasurer] for her work and maybe it will produce concrete results.<sup>216</sup>

Goldman believed that the most concrete results in the form of quick aid were likely to come from within the anarchist networks. In her letters, she always complained about indifferent attitude of the British people to the refugee problem. In English, she said to Saornil in her June 4, 1938 letter:

We have worked devilishly. We have not permitted a single opportunity to go by that would bring the SIA before the English masses; but without repeating myself I can only say that it is bitter hard work to achieve anything for the SIA or the CNT in this country. About the tour in Canada, such a tour would be of importance to our cause in Spain.... For this purpose I shall need a special credential for the SIA for Canada and the USA, although I am not at all sure whether I will be able to enter the latter.<sup>217</sup>

Goldman thought that her name was anathema in England.<sup>218</sup> Thus, appealing to the anarchist comrades in other countries was a better option for Goldman than asking the British people's response. For this reason, she always advocated reinforcing the anarchist network through a strong interaction among the SIA sections in different parts of the world. As the letter indicated, Goldman wanted to enter America to make propaganda work, but she was barred from it. Now she would invite her anarchist comrades at the American section of the SIA to Europe. She insisted on their being invited to the AIT [International Workers Association] Congress to be held in Paris in October 1938. In her August 12, 1938 letter to Lucía Sánchez Saornil, she wrote in Spanish:

From Sweden, our comrade Anderson wrote to me to inform that the representatives of the SIA sections in Europe are required to meet at least once or twice during the AIT Congress in Paris in October. It seemed to me a

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<sup>216</sup> “Je me demande si vous faites quelque chose à propos des films que vous m’avez montrés. Je parle des copies de 16mm. Je pense que vous pourriez faire ces copies pour la section anglaise de Londres.... Cela aidera Ethel Mannin dans son travail et peut-être cela apportera-t-il des resultats concretes.” Emma Goldman to Lucía Sánchez Saornil, August 6, 1938. Reel 69.

<sup>217</sup> Emma Goldman to Lucía Sánchez Saornil, June 4, 1938. Reel 43.

<sup>218</sup> “Mi nombre en Inglaterra es anatema.” Emma Goldman to Lucía Sánchez Saornil, January 21, 1938. Reel 45.

good idea, and I think you [the General Secretariat] will need to write to each section outside of Spain, and particularly to those newly forming in America.<sup>219</sup>

Although the comrade from Sweden asked the SIA to invite only European sections, Goldman wanted the American section of the SIA to be involved in the process. She would not be able to make propaganda-in-person in America, but in a compensatory effort, she would contribute to the development of the newly forming American section by inviting it to Europe. In the congress, the American section would be called on to awake the consciences of the Americans concerning the situation in Spain.

Most of the results of these efforts on the part of the SIA were channelled into the welfare of the Spanish refugee children. The situation of refugee children, who comprised a quarter of the whole refugee population, occupied a special place in the agenda of the Republican side. As Mary Nash suggests, official organizations were created to care for these refugee children. Under the Ministry of Health and Social Assistance, the section for child hygiene treated over 40,000 children in 38 dispensaries, and the National Council for Evacuated Children in Catalonia founded 74 children's camps by December 1938. The task of clothing and feeding these refugee children, along with soldiers at the front, was concentrated in the hands of women's organizations.<sup>220</sup> Mujeres Libres took the lead in this process calling on

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<sup>219</sup> “Desde Suecia me ha escrito Anderson, sugiriendo que los representantes de las secciones se SIA en Europa, se deberían reunir, al menos una o dos veces, durante el Congreso de la AIT en París en Octubre. Me parece una buena idea, y estimo que deberiais escribir a todas las secciones fuera de España, y aún a las que radican en America, sobre el particular.” Emma Goldman to Lucía Sánchez Saornil, August 12, 1938. Reel 44.

<sup>220</sup> Nash, 138-148.

women to welcome the refugee children in their homes. The group also founded a nursery school in which 70 refugee children would be given treatment.<sup>221</sup>

Emma Goldman also attended to the needs of refugee children. In her December 6, 1938 letter to Lucía Sánchez Saornil, she wrote in French:

I want to inform you, before all, that we will send clothes to Perpignan [a city in France close to Catalonia] for the SIA. There are clothes for winter for children, women, and men as well, all of which I have been provided with by my friends upon my request.<sup>222</sup>

This thesis argued in the previous chapters that the importance of children was firmly rooted in anarcho-feminist thought. For a woman, nurturing and caring for her child was her “most glorious privilege”, as the anarcho-feminists called it. Thus, Goldman, along with her Spanish comrades, wanted to ensure that refugee children were properly cared for. Most of these refugee children were the offspring of the exiled CNT-FAI members. This fact also increased the importance of these children in the eyes of the anarchists of the SIA. These children, already acquainted with anarchist thought, were too precious to be lost to the tyranny of Franco. Even their schooling, at this time of great suffering, was not to be neglected, as the tragedy going on in Spain, the anarchists of the SIA believed, stemmed from the ignorance of the Spanish people. The magazine *Mujeres Libres* number 12, also pointed to this fact: “The tragedy of Spain, for centuries, is the same: children without schooling, the exploitation of the illiterate class.”<sup>223</sup>

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<sup>221</sup> Martha Ackelsberg, *Free Women of Spain: Anarchism and the Struggle for the Emancipation of Women*, (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1991), 140.

<sup>222</sup> “Je veux vous informer avant tout que nous allons envoyer des vêtements à Perpignan pour la SIA. Il y a des vêtements chauds pour enfants, femmes, et hommes aussi que des amis m’ont donnés à ma demande.” Emma Goldman to Lucía Sánchez Saornil, December 6, 1938. Reel 69.

<sup>223</sup> “La tragedia de España es, de siglos, la misma: infancia sin escuela, explotación de la clase analfabeta.” In “Infancia sin escuela,” *Mujeres Libres* 12, (1938), 28.

To avoid the disruption of children's schooling, providing schools for the refugees was an important part of the activities of Mujeres Libres.<sup>224</sup> It was hard to find intact school buildings at a time when the country had suffered vast destruction. However, with "collective action" Goldman thought they could ameliorate the conditions of schools. She heartened Lucía Sánchez Saornil in this respect. She wrote in her August 12, 1938 letter: "With all my heart, I wish the SIA could fix the schools."<sup>225</sup> Children educated in these schools, after the anti-fascist struggle, would benefit the new anarchist society.

As important as the amelioration of schools was another issue that preoccupied the Spanish anarchists. It was to provide food for the refugees in the face of an acute food shortage in Spain ongoing since 1936. As Mary Nash suggests:

In the spring of 1938, chronic malnutrition touched off an epidemic of illnesses that devastated the adult population of Madrid. Other areas in the direct line of trench warfare such as Asturias, the Basque country, and Aragón suffered immediately from supply shortages. Hunger and scarcity of provisions plagued the entire homefront beginning in the autumn of 1936.<sup>226</sup>

In these dire circumstances, Goldman sent food to Mujeres Libres aside from clothing. Mercedes Comaposada, the co-founder of Mujeres Libres, put across her gratitude to Goldman in her December 11, 1938 letter. She wrote in French:

The first piece of news I got from you is splendid: an awesome quantity of food you sent to me through the SIA. As you know very well our situation in this respect, I really appreciate the real, symbolic, and emotional value of this sisterly gift of yours. I thank you very much for that.<sup>227</sup>

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<sup>224</sup> Ackelsberg, 140.

<sup>225</sup> "Con toda mi alma deseo que la SIA haya podido introducir mejoras en las escuelas." Emma Goldman to Lucía Sánchez Saornil, August 12, 1938. Reel 44.

<sup>226</sup> Nash, 144.

<sup>227</sup> "La première nouvelle que j'ai eu de toi c'est splendide: un magnifique ensemble de vivres que SIA m'a donné de ta part. Comme tu sais bien quelle est notre situation à cet égard, je n'ai pas besoin de t'exprimer la valeur réel, symbolique et sentimental de ton fraternal souvenir. Je t'en remercie bien." Emma Goldman to Mercedes Comaposada, December 11, 1938. Reel 69.

Evidently, the tone of the letter is intimate and grateful. *Mujeres Libres*, in fact, appreciated the efforts of Goldman for it in every area of exigency. By late 1938, Goldman had done her utmost in her collaboration with *Mujeres Libres* and the SIA sections to aid the refugees. She had arranged exhibitions and film shows. She had tried to sell the group's magazine *Mujeres Libres*, had published a joint bulletin of *Mujeres Libres* and the SIA, and had sent clothing and food to refugees. As the representative of the CNT at the London section of the SIA, she tried to introduce the sufferings of the Spanish refugees to the whole world.

*Mujeres Libres* named one of their farms after Goldman to acknowledge these efforts. Mercedes Comaposada informed Goldman about this news in her December 11, 1938 letter. She wrote in French:

I am pleased to inform you that our farm is undergoing a great transformation. It is directed by our 26th Division. Here are made new installations with bathes and all kinds of modern services in line with pedagogical requirements. Now, it is named "Granja Emma Goldman" [The Emma Goldman Farm]. We will send you the pictures of it.<sup>228</sup>

The farm, furnished with all facilities, must have looked like an anarchist commune. Products reaped from the farm were shared collectively by the inhabitants, as was the case in all agricultural collectives extending across Spain. In the bigger picture, "The Emma Goldman Farm" may be taken to be a microcosm of Goldman's ideal society where everything was done and shared mutually and where children were raised in the light of rationalistic pedagogical requirements.

Up to this page, this chapter has explored the year 1938 in which Emma Goldman promoted propaganda and fund-raising activities for *Mujeres Libres* and

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<sup>228</sup> "J'ai le plaisir de te communiquer qu'à notre Granja on opère à présent une grande transformation. Elle est patrociné par notre 26 División, et on y fait de nouvelle installations, avec qu'à l'ordre pédagogique. Elle s'appelle à présent 'Granja Emma Goldman'. Nous t'en enverrons des photographies." Emma Goldman to Mercedes Comaposada, December 11, 1938. Reel 69.

the SIA. As the year 1938 came to an end, Goldman delayed her trip to Canada until April and left London for Amsterdam on December 22, 1938. She stayed in this city for one month and returned to London again. As she informed Lucia Sánchez Saornil of this trip in her January 21, 1939 letter, she worked at the Social Institute of Amsterdam to arrange her own writings and those of Alexander Berkman's.<sup>229</sup>

Goldman, working on her personal tasks, did not give up her activities for the refugees. She asked Saornil to send copies of films to the London office. In her January 15, 1939 letter, she wrote in English:

I had hoped to be able to show the "Mon Nou" film privately as I had suggested to raise some money for this colony and send some food parcels and clothes. I had also hoped to show "The Festival of the Book". You know yourself how important films are in the work for Spain.<sup>230</sup>

Goldman asked for these two films, as she had planned to show them to make propaganda work and raise funds in Canada. However, her trip was further delayed, as recent developments in Spain endangered her coordination with Mujeres Libres and the Spanish section of the SIA. In January 1939, Franco's troops occupied Barcelona where the activities of Mujeres Libres were heavily concentrated. Worse still, by April 1, 1939, Republican forces were entirely defeated by Franco.<sup>231</sup>

In February 1939, Mujeres Libres was dissolved, as many of its cadres went into exile in France. In fact, the dissolution of the group can be traced back to the Libertarian Movement Congress of CNT-FAI-FIJJ held in October 1938 in which Mujeres Libres was not acknowledged as an autonomous fourth branch of the libertarian movement. The group's demand to be officially recognized was thwarted

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<sup>229</sup> "Estuve trabajando un mes en el Instituto Social, arreglando los escritos de nuestro camarade Alejandro Berkman y mi colección." Emma Goldman to Lucia Sánchez Saornil, January 21, 1939. Reel 45.

<sup>230</sup> Emma Goldman to Lucía Sánchez Saornil, January 15, 1939. Reel 45.

<sup>231</sup> Nash, 134-182.

on the grounds that “anarchism admitted of no differences by sex, and a specifically woman’s organization would be a source of disunity and inequality within the libertarian movement.”<sup>232</sup> After the Congress, *Mujeres Libres* could no longer get any financial support from the CNT. The group was dispossessed of its buildings. Members of the group worked on their activities with their own means.

Federica Montseny tried to intermediate between the CNT and *Mujeres Libres*, but she was also in a helpless situation. By this time, she had resigned from her post as the Minister of Health and Social Assistance in May 1937 when the Largo Caballero government was succeeded by the socialist-communist Juan Negrín government on May 17, 1937. Then, she served as the Secretary of Propaganda at the national committee of the CNT in Valencia. But, after Franco’s occupation of Barcelona, Federica Montseny and her husband Germinal Esgleas, along with the former’s family, left Spain for Paris. Montseny’s mother, the well-known anarchist Soledad Gustavo died in this city. After the Nazi occupation of northern France, they settled in Toulouse. When Federica Montseny was pregnant with her daughter, Franco asked for Federica Montseny’s extradition, but the French authorities rejected it.<sup>233</sup>

By the end of February 1939, after the occupation of Barcelona by the troops of Franco, the co-founders of *Mujeres Libres* were exiled into Perpignan. For some time, they were allowed to continue their activities there. As Laura Sánchez Blanco suggests, “In February 1939, *Mujeres Libres* was dissolved in exile, but the initiative that marked the beginnings of anarcho-feminism and its ideas extended to other

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<sup>232</sup> Ackelsberg, 158-159.

<sup>233</sup> Shirley F. Fredricks, “Federica Montseny and Spanish Anarchist Feminism,” *Frontiers: Journal of Women’s Studies* 6-3 (Winter, 1976): 71-80, 76-77.; Susanna Tavera, *Federica Montseny: La indomable*, (Madrid: temas de hoy, 2005), 236-262.

countries.”<sup>234</sup> However, it was not long before they were barred from sustaining their activities and ideology by being isolated in a little village. Lucía Sánchez Saornil informed Goldman about their situation in France. She wrote in her February 25, 1939 letter in French:

We were not allowed to remain in Perpignan where at first we were able to work successfully in the evacuation of women and children from our colonies. On the 10<sup>th</sup> of February, all our settlements were evacuated and little children, with the help of the Federation of Spanish Committees of Perpignan, were placed with private families until, all of a sudden, the French authorities forbade all our activities. They closed down the shelter we had improvised, they pulled down our offices and put us in the street.... From Perpignan, under the threat of arrest, we went to Paris; but were not allowed to stay there and we have been sent to Lagny, a little village 24 km out of the capital. We hope to be allowed to stay here, although we are breaking the rules, as we work with the French SIA.<sup>235</sup>

Saornil concluded her letter by informing Goldman that no sooner had she finished this letter than she had the great joy of embracing Mercedes Comaposada, the co-founder of *Mujeres Libres*, newly arrived at the village.<sup>236</sup> The village, as seen, was getting crowded with anarchists forced to stay there. At first, *Mujeres Libres* was able to sustain their activities within the anarchist network. However, with each passing day, regulations became more strict at the village, as more anarchists were encamped. Then, their coordination with the SIA sections were curtailed. All they could do, as Saornil indicated in her letter, was to entrust refugee

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<sup>234</sup> “En Febrero 1939, *Mujeres Libres* desapareció en el exilio, pero la iniciativa que tuvo marcó en España el inicio del anarchofeminismo y sus ideas se entendieron a otros países.” Laura Sánchez Blanco, “El Anarchofeminismo En España: Las Propuestas Anarquistas De *Mujeres Libres* Para Conseguir La Igualdad De Géneros,” *Foro de Educación*, no 9, (2007): 229-238, 233.

<sup>235</sup> “No se nos permitió continuar en Perpignan, donde en los primeros momentos trabajamos con fruto en la evacuación de las mujeres y niños de nuestras Guarderías. El día 10, estaban evacuados todos nuestros establecimientos y los pequeños, con la ayuda de la Federación de Comites Españoles de Perpignan iban siendo colocados en familias hasta que un buen día las autoridades francesas nos prohibieron radicalmente toda actuación, clausuraron el refugio que habíamos improvisado, desmontaron nuestras oficinas y nos echaron a la calle. De Perpignan y bajo amenaza de detención pasamos a París donde tampoco se nos ha dejado permanecer, enviandonos a Lagny, un pueblecito a 24 kilómetros de la capital, y en el que aun esperamos nos concedan la residencia, aunque, como ves, vulneramos la consigna y trabajamos en París junto a la SIA francesa.” Lucía Sánchez Saornil to Emma Goldman, February 25, 1939. Reel 45.

<sup>236</sup> “En el momento de acabar esta carta recibo la inmensa alegría de abrazar a Mercedes.” Ibid.



children to private families in Perpignan. This became a very common practice for Mujeres Libres and the SIA afterwards. In order to provide children, whose parents were either killed or missing, with better lives, they took the initiative to intermediate between children and families. Emma Goldman also collaborated with Mujeres Libres in this matter. In her March 8, 1939 letter, she informed Saornil about one of such cases in Spanish:

I want to tell you that here we have a married Spanish couple who proposed to adopt a Spanish child. They are ready to go to southern France to see the child and take him with them. The wife was in Spain and had been a nurse in the front for a few months in 1937. I trust in their sincerity; the child they will adopt shall have a cozy home. Perhaps, our other comrades might follow suit. But, first it is necessary to select the child. Please tell me if it is possible for you to submit to me a list of names of those children who want to be adopted. Please write to me about it as soon as possible.<sup>237</sup>

Goldman and Mujeres Libres did not want to leave refugee children unattended. When the refugee problem started, children were again first to be aided. Their schooling, clothing, and nutrition were prioritized areas of help on the anarcho-feminists' agenda. Given that most of the refugee children were the offspring of the CNT-FAI members, Goldman and Mujeres Libres rushed to their aid. They offered "mutual aid" with "collective action". As Goldman's letter indicated, they also wanted to entrust these children with familiar couples of anarchist tendencies. Thus, the offsprings of their comrades would assuredly grow as anarchist. The child to be adopted in Goldman's letter would be given to the care of a couple, the wife having being a nurse, most probably on the Republican side. Anyway, Goldman asked Saornil if they knew any other "comrade" who wanted to adopt a child.

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<sup>237</sup> "Deseo hacer contar que tenemos aquí un matrimonio español que se ha ofrecido a adoptar a un niño español y estan dispuestos a partir al sur de Francia a fin de ver el niño y traerlo con ellos. La esposa fue a España y estuvo de enfermera en el frente varios meses en 1937. Puedo garantizar sus sinceridad y que el niño que ellos adopten encontrara un buen hogar. Tal vez se puedan conseguir otros entre nuestros camarades que hagan lo mismo. Pero es necesario seleccionar el niño que sea. Dime si te sera posible suministrarme una lista con los nombres que desean ser adoptados. Escribeme pronto sobre esto." Emma Goldman to Lucía Sánchez Saornil, March 8, 1939. Reel 45.

By March 1939, a half million Spaniards had gone into exile.<sup>238</sup> Those exiled in France were put into concentration camps where they were closely watched. Families were separated; camaraderies were disrupted due to strict regulations of the French authorities. Emma Goldman was in London following the situation of the co-founders of *Mujeres Libres* besides that of the Spanish refugees. The co-founders of *Mujeres Libres* now had the most urgent need for a comrade to rouse the consciences of people to their tragic situation. Lucía Sánchez Saornil in her February 25, 1939 letter to Goldman asked for her help to appeal to people's consciences. She wrote:

For now, our most urgent need is the solidarity of the whole people.... You do not need to delay your trip to Canada anymore. Perhaps, you can even find some relief for our exiled non-combatant comrades there. To the following address, you can send all the materials you have accumulated.<sup>239</sup>

Goldman would now prepare for her trip to Canada where she would raise money for the refugees, as Saornil asked her to do. Goldman was used to lending an ear to what her comrades, in dire straits, would ask her to do. In one instance, she had helped Alexander Berkman in his preparations for the assassination of Henry Clay Frick. In another, she had rushed to collect the necessary sum to avoid the bankruptcy of two anarchist periodicals. Now, Goldman would make an international outcry to draw people's attention to the situation of the Spanish refugees. "Direct action" taken on the international platform was necessary to save the Spanish refugees in the concentration camps. As Lucía Sánchez Saornil addressed all sections of the SIA in her March 9, 1939 circular in Spanish:

It is necessary to keep our problem top on the agenda. It is necessary to say with a high voice that Franco conquered Spain but not Spaniards.... Without

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<sup>238</sup> Lucía Sánchez Saornil to Emma Goldman, March 9, 1939. Reel 45.

<sup>239</sup> "Por el momento, nuestra necesidad mas inmediata es la solidaridad material de todo el mundo.... No debe hacerte desistir de tu viaje a Canada que ya tenías ultimado. Tal vez allí puedas obtener aun para nuestros exilados que no combatientes ya, un alivio. Aquí puedes, y en la misma forma, enviar todo el material de solidaridad que hayas acumulado." Lucía Sánchez Saornil to Emma Goldman, February 25, 1939. Reel 45.

your aid, our situation will not be compromised; on the contrary, it will grow worse.<sup>240</sup>

Saornil called for the “direct action” of all SIA sections to find a way out of the situation in which Spanish anarchists were embedded. Their home country was occupied, and they were isolated in a foreign country where they were ignorant of the whereabouts of their families and comrades. Moreover, they were under the close watch of the French authorities, thus they could not make any anarchist propaganda either in person or in writing to help themselves. Under these circumstances their anarchist spirit based on the working of the anarchist network was bound to fail, if no relief from other countries was provided. The response of the people of the world to this solicitation of help on the part of Spanish anarchists would be negligible; but, at least there was one person who had never failed them. Almost seventy now, the American comrade Emma Goldman would keep being the foremost aide to the Spanish refugees.

This chapter of the thesis explored the years 1938 and 1939 in which Emma Goldman’ activities for Mujeres Libres and the London section of the SIA overlapped for the case of the Spanish refugees. To raise more funds to provide for the maintenance of the overflowing refugees from the war zones, Goldman took on herself the task to sound out Canadian and American workers on the Spanish situation. Through exhibitions and film shows, whose materials were procured from Mujeres Libres, foreign workers would be introduced to the long-lived anarcho-feminist solidarity of Goldman and Mujeres Libres. However, Goldman’s trips were delayed, as the situation in Spain got worse. Franco’s troops occupied Barcelona in

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<sup>240</sup> “Es necesario, pues, hacer ambiente calido hacia nuestro problema. Es necesario decir bien alto que, Franco ha conquistado España; pero no a los españoles.... Sin vuestro ayuda, nuestra situación no se verá comprometida y dificultada.” Lucía Sánchez Saornil to Emma Goldman, circular no. 24. March 9, 1939. Reel 45.

January 1939, and they defeated the Republican side in April 1939. Mujeres Libres was dissolved in February 1939, and the co-founders of the group were sent into exile. Goldman came to assume a more vital role afterwards. She was called on to rouse people's consciences worldwide to the tragedy of the Spanish refugees. In her old age, as she had done in her earlier days in America, she would not hold back from rushing to aid her comrades. This time, she would attempt to pursue her activities in Canada to raise support. But it would not take long before her tireless activities came to an abrupt end with her death.

## CHAPTER VI

### CONCLUSION

In April 1939, Emma Goldman moved to Canada to continue her fund-raising activities for the Spanish refugees. The co-founders of *Mujeres Libres* were in exile in France, and their communication with the rest of the anarchist network had been restricted. As there is no exchange of letters from April 1939 onwards between *Mujeres Libres* and Goldman, a detailed analysis as to what activities Goldman engaged herself with in Canada for the Spanish refugees, thus, is unknown to scholars. In August 1939, it was Goldman's 50th anniversary since she had entered the anarchist ranks. In October 1939, she kept rushing to aid her anarchist comrades. This time, she put her energies into saving four Italian anarchists from political repression in Canada.<sup>241</sup>

While the co-founders of *Mujeres Libres* were in exile, their legacy of Spanish women's emancipation was crushed overnight by the triumphant Franco's regime. As Mary Nash, the historian of Spanish women, suggests, "The new regime espoused a gender role of submission, docility, and unquestioning obedience to the

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<sup>241</sup> David Porter, ed., preface to *Vision On Fire: Emma Goldman on the Spanish Revolution*, (California: AK Press, 2006), 39.

traditional tenets of domesticity.”<sup>242</sup> Libertarian women’s organizations were replaced by *Sección Femenina*, the only official Francoist women’s organization. It stipulated that “women’s inevitable and absolute destiny was maternity.”<sup>243</sup> Clearly, this understanding reverted to the traditional women’s place in Spanish society before the 1930s espoused by the Spanish Church. The free, anarchist spirit inculcated into the Spanish women during the war years by Goldman and Mujeres Libres, in the face of Franco’s victory, disappeared.

However, as Oriol Pi-Sunyer, an anthropologist, concluded about the efforts Spanish women put into both the military struggle and the struggle for sexual emancipation, “One must recognize that at no other time in Spanish history did women as a collectivity play such a pivotal role in national life.”<sup>244</sup> Accordingly, the anarcho-feminist spirit of this collectivity was in no way easily vanquished. As Mary Nash writes:

Political subjugation ended the mass organization of anarchist women and the open fight for democracy in Spain, but it did not quash women’s democratic will or their goal of emancipation. Throughout the fascist decades, many women continued their political struggle in enforced exile; others within Spain played an active role in the clandestine democratic movement opposed to Franco.<sup>245</sup>

Submitting to political repression was unacceptable in anarchist thinking. This thesis revealed many displays of this attitude. Mujeres Libres, as a semi-autonomous organization, was founded to fight the fascist rule of Franco and to empower women against male supremacy within the ranks of the CNT [National Confederation of Labor]. Thus, this inherent tendency to oppose repression

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<sup>242</sup> Mary Nash, *Defying Male Civilization: Women in the Spanish Civil War*, (Colorado: Arden Press, 1995), 183.

<sup>243</sup> Ibid.

<sup>244</sup> Oriol Pi-Sunyer, review of *Defying Male Civilization: Women in the Spanish Civil War*, by Mary Nash, *American Anthropologist*, New Series 99- 1 (March, 1997): 188-189, 189.

<sup>245</sup> Nash, 184.

continued even after the triumph of Franco. Covertly or not, Spanish anarcho-feminists in exile went on believing in their power to realize an anarchist and egalitarian society.

This display of the long-lived tenacity to anarchist principles and fidelity to collective action both within the anarchist milieu of the CNT and Mujeres Libres provided Emma Goldman with her ideal revolutionary society. Since her youth, Goldman had always dreamed of being involved with such influential anarchist circles. As Alix Kates Shulman, the editor of *Red Emma Speaks: An Emma Goldman Reader* (1972), suggests, “Goldman would find in Barcelona her cherished anarchist revolution come to life.”<sup>246</sup> In America, she had seen many anarchist attempts crushed by the government; she had seen the Haymarket anarchists killed; she was imprisoned for circulating birth-control information; she was again imprisoned for inciting people to riot when the unemployment rate skyrocketed.

On the other hand, in Spain, anarchist organizations acted like a government. In this hotbed of anarchism, Goldman indulged herself in many activities on behalf of Mujeres Libres. She set the group’s agenda; she advised the group to break the fetters of the Church and the patriarchal society for women’s thorough emancipation. She counselled Spanish women to be self-sufficient and self-supporting in the path towards emancipation. Mujeres Libres forged its agenda according to this advice of Goldman besides taking war exigencies into account. It empowered women through literacy classes and also held many other practical training courses for women to get jobs in the circumstance of the shortage of men. In the long run, through this

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<sup>246</sup>Alix Kates Shulman, ed., preface to Part Four, *Red Emma Speaks: An Emma Goldman Reader*, (New York: Humanity Books, 1998), 378.

training, women would be self-sufficient, no more depending on their men in the anarchist society to be built after the anti-fascist struggle.

It was in this Spanish experience that Goldman's anarcho-feminist stance came to be embodied thanks to her collaboration with *Mujeres Libres*. Goldman was the first anarchist to intermingle her anarchist tenets with the sexual concerns of women.<sup>247</sup> But this side of her experience was not allowed to take root in the American setting. However, in Spain, *Mujeres Libres* embraced Goldman's ideas on marriage, free love, birth control, voluntary motherhood, and prostitution. When *Mujeres Libres* came to develop a rhetoric on these topics related with women's controlling their own body and raising their self-awareness, it derived much from the arguments Goldman had made earlier in America.

The anarcho-feminist stance of Goldman also came to prominence in the case of the Spanish refugees. Saving and helping refugee women and children through collective action became a vital part of the both sides' anarcho-feminist solidarity. Nurturing and caring for children had always been seen as the area where women would use their "most glorious privilege". Thus, anarcho-feminists helped refugee children by providing them with clothing and food. They founded children's colonies; they repaired and reorganized the schools ruined in the war. They helped children to find comfortable homes through adoptions.

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<sup>247</sup> Bonnie Dark Haaland, "Sexuality, Reproduction and Anarchy: Emma Goldman and the Impurity of the State" (PhD diss., University of Toronto, 1992), 234.; Linda Gordon, "Birth Control and Social Revolution," in Kathy Peiss, ed., *Major Problems in the History of American Sexuality*, (Massachusetts: Houghton Mifflin Company, 2002), 322. Also, as Oz Frankel suggests, some sources of the 1910s indicated that Goldman was seen as the first American to speak publicly in favor of gay and lesbian rights. In Oz Frankel, "Whatever Happened to 'Red Emma'? Emma Goldman, from Alien Rebel to American Icon," *The Journal of American History* 83-3 (Dec., 1996): 903-942, 940.



In empowering Spanish women and in saving refugees, Goldman and Mujeres Libres benefited much from the anarchist tool of propaganda work. In the first place, Mujeres Libres employed propaganda activities to draw support for their newly formed group. To this aim, talks were delivered on the radio; the co-founders of the group travelled across the Catalonia region to introduce women to their ideas. However, their best tool of propaganda tool was the magazine *Mujeres Libres*. And Goldman, the group's best foreign propaganda worker became the representative of this magazine in Europe and America. This was a right choice on the part of Mujeres Libres, as in America, Goldman had been familiar with publishing a magazine with the aim of propaganda work and fundraising through her own publication *Mother Earth*.

Goldman, to raise funds and to introduce Mujeres Libres in Europe, put the magazine on sale in exhibitions. She arranged film shows to attract attention to Mujeres Libres' anarcho-feminist efforts for the Spanish refugees. She also raised money through these activities and sent it to the SIA's [International Antifascist Solidarity] main section in Spain. She extended these activities to England, Canada, and America, thus bringing world's focus on their anarcho-feminist movement.

Aside from her "cherished anarchist revolution" in Spain, Goldman found a very intimate sisterly solidarity and friendship in Spain through Mujeres Libres. Aside from the vacuum that her lover-comrade Alexander Berkman's death had created in her bosom, Goldman, in fact, had yearned for a sisterly friendship throughout her life. As she revealed this in her autobiography *Living My Life* (1931), she had always felt the absence of such a friendship. She had longed for a friend of her own sex with whom she could share the feelings she could not express to men.

However, her relations with other women had been commonly identified as carrying the undertones of competition and jealousy.<sup>248</sup>

Goldman had expressed this concern of hers long before her visit to Spain. She would find the true sisterly companionship she had so long dreamed of in her affiliation with the co-founders of *Mujeres Libres*. The letters of both sides cited throughout this thesis smacked of their intimate camaraderie. After Alexander Berkman's death, Goldman had derived much of her emotional energy from her solidarity with *Mujeres Libres*. And this solidarity made both sides stronger; through their "mutual aid" to one another, in "collective action" they empowered Spanish women to fight fascism and the gender bias prevalent in the Spanish society.

This anarcho-feminist solidarity of Goldman and *Mujeres Libres* was propagandized in England, Canada, and America, although the scale and scope of these networks comprise a gap in historiography. However, in Argentina, where the SIA was well-established, anarcho-feminism took firm root as a movement. As Maxine Molyneux, the author of *Movimientos de mujeres en América Latina: Estudio teórico comparado* (2003) relates, the anarcho-feminist magazine *La Voz de la Mujer* [The Woman's Voice] was influenced by the movement in Spain. Molyneux writes:

The editors and collaborators to the magazine indicated their affiliation with Spanish anarchists and the anarchist community there. This is no surprise, as anarcho-feminism extended as far as Argentina principally from Spain.... The editors of the magazine sought feverishly the collaboration of prominent anarchist women and according to a note that appeared in the magazine's fifth issue, they were in contact with Emma Goldman.<sup>249</sup>

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<sup>248</sup> Emma Goldman, *Living My Life*, volume 1, (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1970), 160.

<sup>249</sup> "Los nombres de las redactoras y colaboradoras indican su filiación con el anarquismo español y la de comunidad. Esto no resulta sorprendente puesto que el feminismo anarquista llegó a Argentina principalmente desde España.... Las redactoras de *La Voz de la Mujer* buscaban activamente la colaboración de mujeres anarquistas prominentes y, según una nota publicada en el número 5, estaban

Just like the magazine *Mujeres Libres* in Spain, *La Voz de la Mujer* became the propaganda tool of the anarcho-feminist circles in Argentina. The anarcho-feminists of Spain concentrated their international collaboration on Latin American countries much more than on any other country. Spanish anarcho-feminists were influenced by Emma Goldman whose writings on marriage, love, and prostitution were well-known in Spain. In Argentina, too, the writings of Emma Goldman along with those of the Spanish anarchist women were being published from the 1880s onwards.<sup>250</sup> Influenced by them, the anarchist women of Argentina modeled themselves on their Spanish counterparts. And after Goldman's solidarity with *Mujeres Libres* was reinforced, anarcho-feminism grew into an international movement. This tri-lateral sisterly solidarity proved fruitful when the members of *Mujeres Libres* were exiled to France. Lucía Sánchez Saornil, the co-founder *Mujeres Libres*, in her February 25, 1939 letter to Goldman mentioned her wish to be allowed into Latin America. She wrote in Spanish: "At present, all our efforts is to find out whether in other countries, particularly in South America, there is a possibility of taking refuge just for the sake of leaving this hell of France."<sup>251</sup>

After Franco's occupation of Spain, many anarchist Spaniards emigrated to other countries. Latin American countries, hosting thousands of Spanish anarchists fleeing Franco's tyranny, came to be an outlet for anarchist and the anarcho-feminist clandestine efforts of these émigrés. The co-founders of *Mujeres Libres*, on the hand, despite their strong wish to go to Latin America, continued to remain in exile in France. But, they insisted on continuing their activities. Suceso Portales and Sara

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en contacto con Emma Goldman y Louise Michel." Maxine Molyneux, *Movimientos de mujeres en América Latina: Estudio teórico comparado*, (Madrid: Ediciones Cátedra, 2003), 43-44.

<sup>250</sup> Maxine Molyneux, "No God, No Boss, No Husband: Anarchist Feminism in Nineteenth-Century Argentina," *Latin American Perspectives* 13- 1 (Winter, 1986): 119-145, 123.

<sup>251</sup> Lucía Sánchez Saornil to Emma Goldman, February 25, 1939; microfilm, reel 45, EG Papers Project, University of Berkeley, California.

Berenguer of *Mujeres Libres* started the magazine *Mujeres Libres de España en el exilio* in London in 1964, publishing it up to 47 issues. This magazine was also known in different parts of the world where many Spanish émigrés concentrated.<sup>252</sup>

As *Mujeres Libres* was dissolved in exile, Emma Goldman on February 17, 1940 suffered a stroke in Canada. One of the most famous orators of America could no longer speak. On her seventieth birthday, the former Secretary-General of the CNT-FAI, Mariano Vázquez sent Goldman a message, appreciating all her contributions to the anti-fascist cause and naming Goldman as “their spiritual mother”. Goldman upon receiving this message wrote that it was the most beautiful tribute she had ever received.<sup>253</sup>

Another tribute to Goldman came from *Mujeres Libres*. It praised all of Goldman’s efforts for their group and her contribution to extending their propaganda work to Europe and Canada. “The Tribute to Goldman from *Mujeres Libres*”, written in Spanish, read:

The fabulous revolutionary anarchist Emma Goldman, who dedicated all her life to the libertarian struggle all around the world, came to Spain to live and contribute personally to our struggle and our social and political problems. She did not come with a hurry of a tourist, as many other visitors did to look askance at our ruined cities; but she came with a determination to live with us, taking to heart all our needs, our problems, our risks, and our immutable resolutions. She put a lot of efforts into our propaganda work all across Europe, even extending it as far as Canada.<sup>254</sup>

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<sup>252</sup> Nelson Méndez, “*Mujeres Libres De España 1936-1939: Cuando florecieron las rosas de fuego*,” *Otras Miradas* 2-001, (June 2002): 29-37, 36.

<sup>253</sup> Alice Wexler, *Emma Goldman: An Intimate Life* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1984), 232.

<sup>254</sup> “Emma Goldman, la magnífica militante revolucionaria que ha dedicado su vida entera al combate por la Libertad en todo el mundo, ha venido una vez más a España, a vivir y medir personalmente el estado de nuestra lucha y de nuestros problemas sociales y políticos. No ha venido, como tantos otros visitantes amigos, con prisa de turista, a dar un vistazo indignado a las ruínas de nuestras ciudades bombardeadas, sino con detenimiento obstinado de varias semanas de convivencia profunda, sintiendo en sí misma nuestras necesidades, nuestros problemas, nuestros peligros, nuestra resolución inquebrantable, para poder luego poner una concienzuda y bien entrañada verdad en la propagande de nuestra causa a través de Europa, prolongándola esta vez hasta el Canadá.” “Tribute to Goldman from *Mujeres Libres*,” <http://sunsite.berkeley.edu/Goldman/Exhibitions/tribute.html>

To maximize her propaganda work for *Mujeres Libres*, Goldman applied the anarchist propaganda tools she had used earlier in America. Since her entrance into the anarchist ranks in America, mass publishing, lecturing, and organizing campaigns to raise funds had become her common propaganda tools. In order to further *Mujeres Libres*' cause, she kept using these same tools. She appealed to Spanish women through mass publishing; she contributed to the group's magazine *Mujeres Libres* and represented it in Europe and the USA. Goldman lectured many times to Spanish workers using her usual feverish rhetoric and theatrical presentation; she made talks on the radio. Aside from these, she made propaganda-in-person. She attended women's conferences in Europe as the delegate of *Mujeres Libres*, introducing the group to women's circles. Goldman also arranged exhibitions and film shows to introduce the group's anarcho-feminist activities, and to raise funds for the Spanish refugees.

As David Porter, the editor of *Vision On Fire: Emma Goldman on the Spanish Revolution* (2006), suggests, Goldman described her involvement in the Spanish revolution as “coming home after a life-time of pilgrimage”.<sup>255</sup> She had been disillusioned by the countries where she had lived until she came to Spain. She was barred by the American government from fully developing her anarcho-feminist activities through raids on her lectures, several arrests, and three long terms of imprisonment. Likewise, when she was exiled in Soviet Russia where the Bolsheviks suppressed the anarchists, Goldman was denied from organizing meetings and making public speeches. Then, she stayed with her lover-comrade Alexander Berkman in Germany, Sweden, and France. But after Berkman's death, she found refuge in her camaraderie with *Mujeres Libres*.

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<sup>255</sup>Emma Goldman to William Jong, February 10, 1937. In Porter, preface.

On May 14, 1940, Goldman died from a second stroke in Toronto at the age of seventy-one. The US Immigration and Naturalization Service gave a visa for her body to be brought to the USA. Goldman was buried in the German Waldheim Cemetery in Chicago, Illinois near the Haymarket martyrs. Her life as an anarchist which began with a dedication to these martyrs' cause was laid to its final rest next to their graves.

In retrospect, Goldman thought that her life and her anarchist works had been successful. She wrote in her essay "Was My Life Worth Living?":

If I had my life to live over again, like anyone else, I should wish to alter minor details. But in any important actions and attitudes I would repeat my life as I have lived it. Certainly I should work for Anarchism with the same devotion and confidence in its ultimate triumph.<sup>256</sup>

These words of Goldman's concluded that her life dedicated to anarchism was successful. Certainly, this sterling example of a rebellious life changed many other lives, too. This thesis looked at only one pillar of its effect through the case of the Spanish anarcho-feminist group *Mujeres Libres* and concluded that Emma Goldman was the pioneer of the anarcho-feminist movement, contributing to the development of *Mujeres Libres*. The other goal of this thesis has been to show that Goldman was in the vanguard of introducing anarcho-feminist ideology, as embodied in her solidarity with *Mujeres Libres*, into the international arena.

However, the life-span of this effect of their collaboration was not limited to the Spanish Civil War years only. During the second-wave of feminism in the 1970s, both Emma Goldman and *Mujeres Libres* were rediscovered. Goldman became an icon for anarchists and feminists. She gained recognition as a popular figure through being featured in more than six plays and documentaries, children's books, a high

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<sup>256</sup> Emma Goldman, "Was My Life Worth Living?" in Shulman, 434.

school curriculum, Ph.D. dissertations, a mural, and even a computer game. Furthermore, some women's clinics were named after Emma Goldman.<sup>257</sup> Finally, the legacy of Mujeres Libres heavily influenced the members of the burgeoning Spanish feminist movement of the 1970s who admired their foremothers' devotion to women's liberation during the Spanish Civil War.<sup>258</sup> The memory of Emma Goldman is still influential today. Papers are delivered on her; plays featuring her are performed. Her sayings appear on buttons, posters, and bumper stickers. All these capture the spirit of her belief in liberty and self-expression.

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<sup>257</sup> Frankel, "Whatever Happened to 'Red Emma'?", 904.

<sup>258</sup> Nash, 185.

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