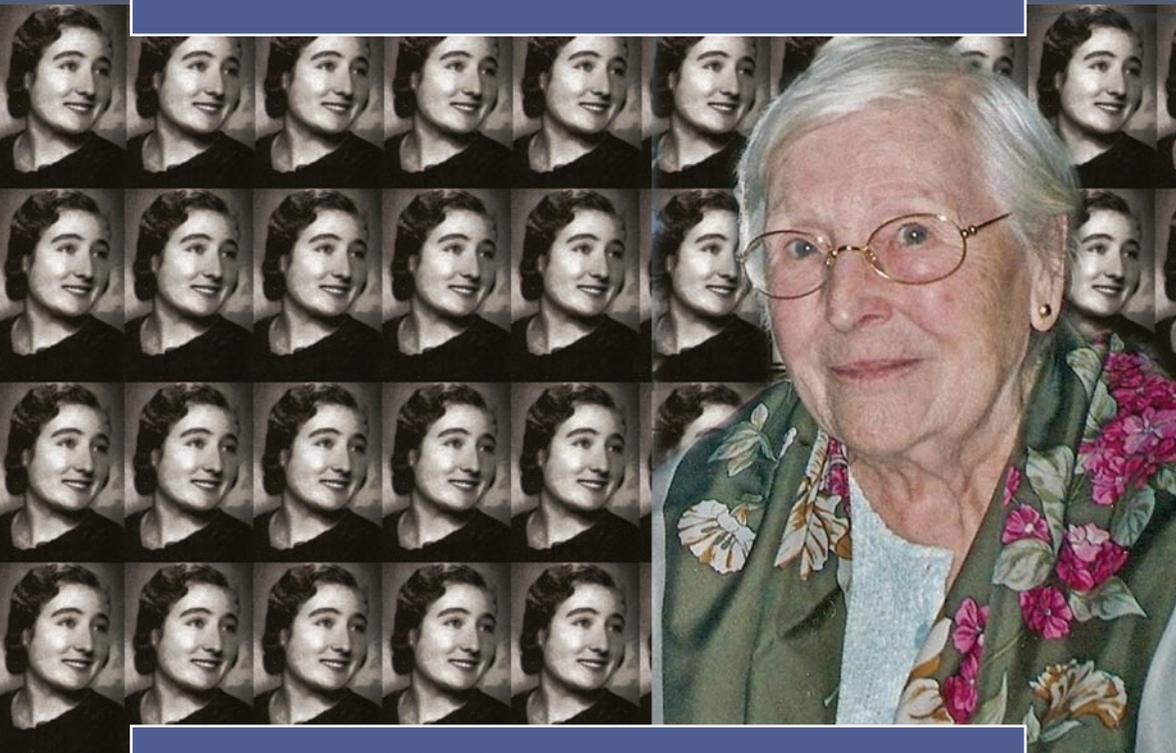


# Free Women (Mujeres Libres)

Voices and Memories for a Libertarian Future

*Prologue by Sara Berenguer*

Laura Ruiz



*SensePublishers*

TRANSGRESSIONS: CULTURAL STUDIES AND EDUCATION  
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This book series is dedicated to the radical love and actions of Paulo Freire, Jesus “Pato” Gomez, and Joe L. Kincheloe.

## TRANSGRESSIONS: CULTURAL STUDIES AND EDUCATION

Cultural studies provides an analytical toolbox for both making sense of educational practice and extending the insights of educational professionals into their labors. In this context *Transgressions: Cultural Studies and Education* provides a collection of books in the domain that specify this assertion. Crafted for an audience of teachers, teacher educators, scholars and students of cultural studies and others interested in cultural studies and pedagogy, the series documents both the possibilities of and the controversies surrounding the intersection of cultural studies and education. The editors and the authors of this series do not assume that the interaction of cultural studies and education devalues other types of knowledge and analytical forms. Rather the intersection of these knowledge disciplines offers a rejuvenating, optimistic, and positive perspective on education and educational institutions. Some might describe its contribution as democratic, emancipatory, and transformative. The editors and authors maintain that cultural studies helps free educators from sterile, monolithic analyses that have for too long undermined efforts to think of educational practices by providing other words, new languages, and fresh metaphors. Operating in an interdisciplinary cosmos, *Transgressions: Cultural Studies and Education* is dedicated to exploring the ways cultural studies enhances the study and practice of education. With this in mind the series focuses in a non-exclusive way on popular culture as well as other dimensions of cultural studies including social theory, social justice and positionality, cultural dimensions of technological innovation, new media and media literacy, new forms of oppression emerging in an electronic hyperreality, and postcolonial global concerns. With these concerns in mind cultural studies scholars often argue that the realm of popular culture is the most powerful educational force in contemporary culture. Indeed, in the twenty-first century this pedagogical dynamic is sweeping through the entire world. Educators, they believe, must understand these emerging realities in order to gain an important voice in the pedagogical conversation.

Without an understanding of cultural pedagogy's (education that takes place outside of formal schooling) role in the shaping of individual identity—youth identity in particular—the role educators play in the lives of their students will continue to fade. Why do so many of our students feel that life is incomprehensible and devoid of meaning? What does it mean, teachers wonder, when young people are unable to describe their moods, their affective affiliation to the society around them. Meanings provided young people by mainstream institutions often do little to help them deal with their affective complexity, their difficulty negotiating the rift between meaning and affect. School knowledge and educational expectations seem as anachronistic as a ditto machine, not that learning ways of rational thought and making sense of the world are unimportant. But school knowledge and educational expectations often have little to offer students about making sense of the way they feel, the way their affective lives are shaped. In no way do we argue that analysis of the production of youth in an electronic mediated world demands some “touchy-feely” educational superficiality. What is needed in this context is a rigorous analysis of the interrelationship between pedagogy, popular culture, meaning making, and youth subjectivity. In an era marked by youth depression, violence, and suicide such insights become extremely important, even life saving. Pessimism about the future is the common sense of many contemporary youth with its concomitant feeling that no one can make a difference.

If affective production can be shaped to reflect these perspectives, then it can be reshaped to lay the groundwork for optimism, passionate commitment, and transformative educational and political activity. In these ways cultural studies adds a dimension to the work of education unfilled by any other sub-discipline. This is what *Transgressions: Cultural Studies and Education* seeks to produce—literature on these issues that makes a difference. It seeks to publish studies that help those who work with young people, those individuals involved in the disciplines that study children and youth, and young people themselves improve their lives in these bizarre times.

# Free Women (Mujeres Libres)

*Voices and Memories for a Libertarian Future*

Laura Ruiz

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This book is dedicated to Pepita Carpena, who died on the 5<sup>th</sup> of June 2005 when she was finishing this book; and to Sara Berenguer and all the people who have made our eyes shine in the battle for love, passion, freedom and equality.



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I was a young girl then, almost a child, I was 16. At that young age I found myself up to my ears in this Revolution (...) The world was ours and our hopes were immense (...) Everything was advancing with giant steps, and the sixteen years I had lived felt like more, because our understanding was more mature due to the experiences we had lived through, firstly in the syndicate and then due to the explosion of what I will always call the Social Revolution.

Fragment from a text which Pepita Carpena wrote in May 1936 for the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Social Revolution (Berenguer et al. 1999).

The splendour of a new horizon made us restless, clearly capturing the moment we were living in: It was Freedom, the will to do things, the commitment to the fight, the dreams, and hope. The emotions were so great that we never thought that what had been achieved could be snatched away from us by someone (...) Free Women, united by a spirit of freedom and justice, was a generation which was being born for the second time.

Fragment from a letter written by Sara Berenguer to us, in July 2002, to be read at the Annual CNT Ceremony held in Toulouse, for the anniversary of the Social Revolution.



## PROLOGUE

The pages of this book aim to clarify any ideas and thoughts related to the actions of women during the Social Revolution and the Civil War in Spain. These actions were kept locked away in the depths of female history. The movement which was then in progress opened up new horizons in which self confident and risk-taking women with a thirst for knowledge learnt to read and write, while at the same time fighting for their emancipation. The majority of them regained or discovered a personality they were unaware of, thus breaking down pathways full of obstacles.

The book investigates and emphasises the willpower of these women who had suddenly found themselves in a new situation, in which only the confidence and humanism they had within themselves gave them strength, in order to face the obstacles which had previously obstructed their path. Their words, along with their actions, effectively ensured that they were able to put their idea into practice.

Within these pages concerns and calls to reinforce the past in the present were reborn. The conquests achieved by Free Women as far as education and women's rights are concerned are linked to contemporary feminist and educational movements, such as dialogic feminism, the experience in the La Verneda-Sant Martí Adult Education School in Barcelona, the international movement entitled *Mil y una tertulia literaria dialógica por todo el Mundo* [One thousand and one dialogic literary gatherings around the world]<sup>1</sup>, dialogic learning, and the movement towards Democratic Education for Adults, as well as other movements. This raises awareness of a present and a past full of initiatives and actions which fight to make social inequalities disappear, and create a world where people can be freer.

The work and the person of Francesc Ferrer i Guàrdia are also vindicated in these pages, due to the impact the work of the rationalist teacher managed to achieve. His work not only influenced the activities which were later carried out in the libertarian movement, activities which Free Women also encouraged, but also due to the international repercussions which his educational theories and practices had. The unjust and slanderous campaign and the "black legend" which was invented about him and brought against him due to envy and in order to question the forces in power at the time, and which had the sole aim of destroying his work and his reputation, will be demonstrated here.

The word *Anarchy* will also be vindicated in this book time and time again. It must not be confused with the definition which some apply to it through ignorance, linking it to violence and disorder. As is shown in these pages *Anarchy* is the maximum expression of order, using the words of Elisée Reclus, it is living with an ethical conscience, and placing a value on humanity through justice.

The fact that Free Love was sometimes understood as men having certain rights over women is also pointed out. Since it was in their own interest to believe that, some men wanted a free woman to be a woman who would be willing to accept all the sexual intercourse which was offered to her. Therefore here we will be able to clear up the misunderstandings and present the facts in relation to free love, since it

## PROLOGUE

was only the ignorance of a few people which caused it to be understood incorrectly. Despite the experience of the Social Revolution, there was still a lot to be learnt with regards to sexual freedom. Reigniting this issue provides a response to concern with regards to the fact that there are still a lot of remaining prejudices and double standards which currently still exist and need to be overcome, since some men continue to see sexual freedom as a way to use women as mere sexual objects.

A social and sexual revolution requires a great deal of effort from everyone involved in order to make it happen. Although a great deal of things were achieved through the libertarian movement, the war, and the counterrevolution of May 1937, there were also setbacks which suffocated the inspiration of freedom, asphyxiating that feeling and spirit which was beginning to discover a new world. However, although there was not much time to convert our ideals and hopes into reality, we left behind examples of altruism and a great deal of human solidarity with those who gave their lives, and, why not, one day those hopes and ideals may reappear.

*Sara Berenguer*  
*Montady, July 2006*  
*70 years later*

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> All sentences in brackets contain translator's own translation.

## INTRODUCTION

Pepita Carpena and Sara Berenguer<sup>1</sup> participated in one of the most impressive women's movements in history. However, it was a movement which the Francoist dictatorship destroyed and snatched away from our memories. Twenty thousand women (almost all of them were young workers and had no academic studies) transformed their relationships and lives in ways which were the precursor to the approaches which are now beginning to be used in current international feminism. They did not limit themselves to simply demanding equality in all areas of working and social life, but they also refocused love and sexuality towards helping to overcome what is today called hegemonic masculinity.

This book includes the voices of these two Free Women, Pepita Carpena and Sara Berenguer, based on the memories they have of their life experiences. The aim of this book is not to simply describe two life stories in order to construct autobiographies since both women have already written those themselves. These autobiographies can be found in two fascinating books entitled *Toda una vida* by Pepita Carpena and *Entre el Sol y la Tormenta* by Sara Berenguer. Nor is it a book which exclusively aims to describe the Free Women organisation, there are also exemplary books which have already done so, such as *Mujeres Libres. Luchadoras Libertarias* [Free Women. Libertarian Fighters] written by Sara Berenguer and which includes the testimonies of some of the women who were part of Free Women. This book was edited in 1999 by the Fundación de Estudios Libertarios Anselmo Lorenzo [Anselmo Lorenzo Foundation for Libertarian Studies]. There are also other books written by Marta Ackelsberg and Mary Nash, and a book by Jesús M<sup>a</sup> Montero Barrado which describe the origins of the magazine which gave its name to the Free Women organisation.

This book is based on the memories Pepita and Sara had of the events they experienced in Barcelona during the Social Revolution and the Spanish Civil War (1936-1939) and of their participation in the revolutionary Committees, in the CNT [National Workers Confederation] and in Free Women. These memories are presented here in order to carry out an analysis of the factors which motivated their battle and their involvement in the libertarian movement, specifically in Free Women. An analysis will also be made of the contributions which are valid today as far as the organisation of social movements is concerned, specifically for those who work in the areas of feminism and education. Therefore, this book attempts to provide recognition for the achievements of these women 70 years ago, achievements which should be kept in mind within any social movement which is fighting to overcome gender inequality, or simply in order to achieve a freer and more just society.

Sara and Pepita were both born in 1919, Sara on the 1<sup>st</sup> of January and Pepita on the 18<sup>th</sup> of December, in the working class area of Poble Sec in Barcelona. Despite this coincidence, they did not meet until they became members of the Free Women organisation during the Social Revolution. Both Pepita Carpena and Sara Berenguer were members of other organisations within the libertarian movement before joining Free Women.

## INTRODUCTION

Before becoming a member of Free Women, Pepita was a member of the Metal-workers syndicate CNT-AIT [National Workers Confederation- International Workers Association] and of the Juventudes Libertarias [Libertarian Youth] from the age of 14. A few days after the events of the 19<sup>th</sup> of July 1936 in Barcelona, Sara joined the Les Corts Revolutionary Committee; then she worked in the Comité Regional de Cataluña de las Industrias de la Edificación, Madera y Decoración de la CNT-AIT [CNT-AIT Regional Committee of Catalonia for the Construction Industry, Wood and Decoration]. She combined these activities with other activities in the Les Corts Libertarian Athenaeum<sup>2</sup> and in the Libertarian Youth organisation. Subsequently she worked in the Consejo Nacional de Solidaridad Internacional Antifascista [National International Antifascist Solidarity Council] and then finally became the Secretary for the Free Women's Regional Committee for Catalonia.

Through the memories of these two women you can catch a glimpse of the way they felt, the way they thought and made reflections, and how they organised themselves in order to overcome the unequal situation of female workers. All of these issues become more specific through the values and motivations which moved these women such as solidarity, mutual support, thinking of others before oneself, feelings and sincerity as the basis for relationships, dialogue and consensus, the importance of meeting agreements, the feeling of having a “responsibility to save the Social Revolution”, and the “longing” everyone had to continuously be learning. These values were what made them rebel against injustice, made them organise themselves along with other female workers and rural worker women and struggle for almost three years with no rest for the Social Revolution. They also fought against what they themselves called “the triple slavery of women: the slavery of ignorance, the slavery of women and slavery due to being a worker”.

Those years left a mark on their lives and, after more than 65 years of living in exile in France, Pepita in Marseille and Sara in Montady, they have continued to feel very deeply that it is possible to transform relationships based on power into more egalitarian relationships which make people free. These egalitarian relationships are based on dialogue, feelings, and mutual support, which create more just and less violent societies. These feelings have also ensured that these women have continued to be active within the libertarian movement while in exile, continuing their collaboration with the CNT in France, with the International Anti-Fascist Solidarity Organisation, and forming part of the French resistance during the Nazi occupation. They also helped to found the CIRA *Centre International de Recherches sur l'Anarchisme* in Marseille [International Centre for Research on Anarchism], worked with clandestine organisations during the Franco dictatorship in Spain and founded a magazine entitled *Mujeres Libres en el exilio* [Free Women in Exile]. Both of them continued to be active right up until recently, and Sara still remains active. Pepita died on the 5<sup>th</sup> of June 2005 when she was about to finish this book. She worked in CIRA practically until the end of her days, while Sara Berenguer continues to collaborate with the libertarian press and associations within the movement. She will soon publish a book with gathers together the life stories of women who fought against fascism in Spain and in

other European countries and America, women who official history books have not included in their pages.

The memories of the life experiences which are included in this book are impregnated with the sentiments which they were experienced with, and the values which formed part of these women. Although some of the experiences which are presented here involving people who were part of the libertarian movement make some values visible which contradict libertarian and anarchist values, they insist that this was the result of the attitude of some of the men who, as they say themselves “were not able to understand freedom”. Despite experiencing a Social Revolution, the values of a patriarchal and traditional society were very deep-rooted. Even so, 70 years later, they remembered with “shining eyes” the fact that they had shared a great deal of experiences in the revolution with companions who they continue to admire and love deeply due to everything which has always linked them to each other on a personal level and in their fight for freedom.

An anarchist friend, Jesús Gómez (Pato), whose line of research on love is widely quoted in the movement for the preventative socialization of gender violence, always said that people who have “shining eyes” are the ones who are full of hopes and dreams to continue fighting for the things which are worthwhile in life. Pepita and Sara, now octogenarians, are capable of transmitting hope via their “shining eyes” to men and women who are currently fighting for a freer world with no social inequalities.

#### NOTES

- <sup>1</sup> The literal quotes from Sara Berenguer and Pepita Carpena which correspond to the interviews carried out between 2001 and 2006 are marked with an (S) for Sara, and a (P) for Pepita.
- <sup>2</sup> This is used to name institutions or periodicals for literary, scientific, or artistic study. In this case it would be an institution for literary study. (Translator’s note).



## **THE 1936 SOCIAL REVOLUTION. THE MOST SIGNIFICANT LIBERTARIAN REVOLUTION IN HISTORY**

It is the most extraordinary libertarian revolution which has ever happened.

Noam Chomsky, interview from a documentary  
(Televisió de Catalunya & Genovés, 2006)

### *1.1. The voices of those who experienced the events.*

Frequently historical and social analyses include big events and social phenomena based on official sources, but usually the stories of people who experienced the events themselves are not recorded. However, more and more, analyses are being carried out which do look at the life world as much as they look at the world system.

Women, especially those who had not studied at university such as women in villages or grassroots women, have traditionally been silenced and their tales have not been seen as significant in the analysis of history and social phenomena. This book intends to contribute towards overcoming that barrier, collecting information from these women in order to recover the memory of certain events which cannot be ignored, as well as the memory of the contributions which they made to the society in which they lived.

There are now more and more works which have arisen from the voices of the people who were the protagonists of the events of the 1936 Social Revolution and the Civil War in Spain, in Social and Human Sciences, as well as in the cinema industry. One example of this is the film *Land and Freedom* by Ken Loach. This English director based his script on the book by George Orwell entitled *Homage to Catalonia*. Once the script was finished it was given to people who had experienced the events to read, people from the CNT and the POUM [United Marxist Worker's Party] columns or to people who had participated in one of the organisations during the Social Revolution and the Civil War. This was explained by one of the women who Ken Loach spoke to about the script of the film. This woman, Concha Perez, was a member of Libertarian Youth, she took active part in the CNT and went to the front line as a member of the militia in the Civil War in order to fight fascism. The conversations which Ken Loach had with men and women such as Concha led him to rewrite the script for the film, adjusting it to fit the real events more. Therefore Ken Loach has managed to create a film which tells the story of the Social Revolution (the most significant libertarian revolution which has ever happened to date), as well as the Civil War in Spain better than any other film. The film faithfully reproduces scenes and key moments of their development through events which had previously been described to him by the people who experienced them. Therefore,

this film contains one of the best descriptions of the events of May 1937 in Barcelona, events in which there was a confrontation between the Spanish Communist Party which, supported by Stalin, was trying to suppress the Social Revolution, as well as the anarchists from the CNT and the POUM, which were motivating it. Also the liberation of a village which had been taken by the fascists by the militia took place, as well as a subsequent assembly with the county people from the village where they decided to collectivize the land.

Ken Loach also took the voices of the women who participated in these events into account to a large extent. The women fought alongside the men in the militia until after the events of May 1937, when the government prohibited their presence on the front line as members of the militia, reducing their participation to working as nurses or cooks. This has ensured that the quality of *Land and Freedom* is completely different to that of other films which, even if they had wanted to focus on the role of the female militia, did not take the voices of these women into account, and they completely distorted the true facts of their situation. Faced with those types of films, which have no interest in reflecting reality but are based on rumours, prejudices and the most morbid aspects of events, awareness must be raised of this film which carries out a high quality and rigorous social and historical analysis and includes the voices of the people who were part of the events.

Another example of a historical work on this period which offers fundamental material for the social analysis of the events of the 1936 Social Revolution is the documentary entitled *Vivir la Utopía* [Living the Utopia] by Juan Gamero, Paco Ríos and Mariona Roca. The testimonies of the people who participated in the events of the 1936 Social Revolution and people from the CNT who participated in the Revolutionary Committees, in the city or village communities, in Free Women, in Libertarian Youth, in the Rationalist Schools, in the workers athenaeums etc are all included in this documentary. The events of the Social Revolution start to emerge through the testimonies of these people, the meaning of the events is described and clues are given to help understand why those events led to a revolution. It is impossible to calculate the value of those testimonies, not only in relation to history, but also for the purposes of social analysis, since the criteria, principles and motivations of the people who participated in the revolutionary events are extracted from them, offering factors for analysis which could be taken today by social movements as best practices which would make a more just and free society possible. However their value does not simply lie in the potential to study them from a historical and a social point of view. These men and women, after so many years, continue to transmit their dream that a utopia was possible in 1936 and that, even though this has not happened so far, it could happen in the future. They continue to make you feel that each of the actions which they carry out to fight to overcome social inequalities and power relations are steps which move towards that utopia.

### *1.2. Being part of the Social Revolution.*

In 1936, after a period of strong repression of the libertarian movement which led to the imprisonment of thousands of anarchists, the Frente Popular [Popular Front],

a coalition of leftist parties, which had promised the liberation of political prisoners if they reached government, won the elections. The CNT, with approximately a million members, was the strongest syndicate at that time within the workers movement. It was founded in 1910 as an anarcho-syndicalist organisation, which combined revolutionary syndicalism with libertarian communism and, for the first time, the members voted on a massive scale, therefore the vote of the anarchists and anarcho-syndicalists was decisive in the Frente Popular victory.

On the 18<sup>th</sup> of July 1936 Generals Franco, Mola, Queipo de Llano y Poded headed a coup d'état. This did not catch the people unaware: in the syndicates the workers and country people had been preparing to combat it for some time. On the day following the military uprising, the workers in the areas where the workers movement was strongest, such as Barcelona, Madrid or Asturias, men and women attacked the military barracks to get weapons. In this way, the people took over control of the cities and started to organise what is known as the 1936 Social Revolution.

The CNT-FAI [National Workers Confederation-Iberian Anarchist Federation] and the POUM [United Marxist Workers Party], which had an affinity with libertarian communism, mobilized thousands of people through the Revolutionary Committees, and took control of significant sectors of the country's economy. In the cities, they collectivized factories and services such as the telephone services, public transport, water, electricity and gas. In rural areas, agricultural collectives were organised.

Sara Berenguer always remembers what this meant for the people who experienced the events of the Social Revolution. They felt that they were creating something and were part of something which, until then, they had never experienced.

For us the revolution was a new thing. We were entering a life cycle which had nothing to do with what we had experienced before (S).

Thousands of people participated in the revolutionary events of the 19<sup>th</sup> of July 1936. A great deal of them were village people who were not members of any organisation but who joined them, infected with the excitement and enthusiasm of wanting to change society into one which was more just, free and egalitarian. Everyone contributed what they could according to their means, there was a general feeling that it was possible to do something and that something was being done by everyone (men, women, young people etc.) in order to defend the Social Revolution. Within this context, women played a fundamental role in the development of the revolution and, subsequently, in rearguard activities.

This is how Sara expressed this sentiment in one of the letters she wrote to us:

That experience was paid for in tears by young women, but it also allowed us to advance with giant steps, to see and understand that different life, particularly through contact with veterans; another world was being born, as a direct result of that explosion, and we all saw it through a different perspective (S).

Because if we were fighting it was for everyone. We have to say one thing here, which is that it was because we surrendered ourselves to our ideal. That ideal which was then alight and full of passion, we surrendered everything that we had and more to it, with nothing to spare (S).

### *1.3. Women and the Social Revolution.*

The anarchist revolutionary theory includes the liberation of women as part of the defence of and fight for a society without power relations, with no hierarchy and which is free and egalitarian.

The libertarian movement in Spain was, in comparison with others within the workers movement, the one which worked the most towards overcoming the unequal situation women were in. The usual anarchist instructions in relation to the situation of women were that freedom and equality for women would be the consequence of the Social Revolution. This position followed the same line as that of Bakunin, in which he recognised the equality of women and men, and through which the complete emancipation of women would be achieved through their incorporation into work on the same terms as men. Based on this approach, the fight of women would be carried out alongside that of men as male and female workers, both fighting together from the syndicates in order to improve the situation of female and male workers in general. This was the CNT's position.

In addition to this, Spanish anarchists recognised the triple inequality of women from the beginning, as workers repressed by a capitalist society, as women repressed by men, and as people who had had less opportunities to access education and training. For anarchists women are the "slaves of slaves", exploited by capitalism and also by men, who in some cases are worker men. The anarchists also criticized the dominant attitude which considered women to be beings who were intellectually "inferior" to men.

In this way, Spanish anarchists overcame the attitude created by another type of anarchism, Proudhon's form of anarchism. Proudhon considered women to be a mere breeder who had to carry out her role within the home and to remain in an inferior position in relation to men, who were the ones who had the responsibility of having and active role in the world of work (Ackelsberg, 1999).

Despite having produced a Social Revolution, the emancipation of women did not happen in the way that the CNT and the libertarian movement in general believed it would. The values of a traditional and patriarchal society, which relegated women to subordination, had taken root in Spanish society at that time. Due to this, in society in general and even within the libertarian movement there continued to be situations such as those described by Sara and Pepita.

Well, in private we were well accepted. But when we officially went to ask for something, they did not take us into account a great deal (S).

Yes because there were a great deal of men who had a lot of ideas but when they got home they wanted the women to have a meal on the table (S).

Our male companions did not fully accept Free Women. They did their work, but they saw us as...they didn't trust us. I think that they didn't understand our purpose very well (S).

Ah! They were not very much in agreement no! They were not really in agreement, not all of them; some were (with Free Women). However it was a lot of work for them to think that a woman could defend the rights of women by herself. This is a situation which we experienced and which we had to fight against very strongly (P).

I said to them that if they wanted to live like slaves that they could do so but women would not. I said to them, if you want to live like slaves, go ahead, but leave women to defend themselves (...) then they had no arguments left... (P).

Look, when we closed down the Revolutionary Committee in my neighbourhood, after the events of May 1937, by order of the Generalitat de Catalunya [the Catalan Government]; I was a member of an anarchist group. I was always summoned to the group meetings, but at that time there were a lot of companions in the group who were leaving for the front line and then since the person in charge of the group didn't think women were valuable, then they didn't summon me anymore. This makes you realize that there is a difference, a woman, why would we summon her? What would she come here for? However, I had been a member of the Revolutionary Committee in which I had had a great deal of responsibility (S).

However despite the reticence which some men in the workers movement had, and the battles which remained to win in relation to women, the 1936 Social Revolution gave rise to the increased participation of women in public spaces which they had previously been excluded from. Their presence was becoming visible, in the assemblies, in the syndicates, in the athenaeums, in Revolutionary Committees and in the organisations which were being promoted in the new society which was being constructed. The 1936 Revolution was an opportunity for a great deal of women who were longing to get out of their houses and actively participate in the construction of this new society which they also wanted.

Pepita Carpena became a member of the CNT in 1934, when she was 14. From a very young age she was interested in participating in an organisation which contributed towards overcoming social injustice. When she was little she constantly asked why about everything, she always wanted to know and to know more. She remembers how, often, her father tried to answer everything that she asked him, but at times he had no answers left, surprised by the type of questions a little girl was asking him. Pepita was interested in what was happening in the world, she questioned all of the situations which she came across: the workers strikes, the syndicate organisations, who were they? What did they want? Her father sometimes answered that she was too young to be interested in those subjects, but she insisted and insisted until she got a reply which convinced her.

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I have always been very curious, since I was little, I want to know this, and I want to know that. My father always said this to me: "Child..." when I went out for a walk with him... what is this and what is that and he said to me, well, that's enough now...my father...enough...I asked him too many questions...(P).

Her father was a member of the CNT but only a paying member. She remembers how he often praised the tasks which the activists from the anarcho-syndicalist organisation carried out, *the men from the CNT are very brave, and they always face up to their actions*. Those words always remained engraved on Pepita's memory, she remembered them all her life, especially when she experienced or heard about unjust situations which she could not tolerate.

In 1934 the anarchists and the libertarian movement were going through their lowest period of repression, in which the right-wing parties were governing the Republic and often rose up against the worker's movement with fierce reprisals via military intervention. Even so, Pepita decided to become a member of this organisation whose member's actions had been praised by her father so many times. Since her father was a member of the CNT, Pepita was not sure how the news that she had become a member would be received, since women continued to be, as we have indicated, in a situation of clear inequality in relation to men. A young girl like her had nothing to do in a syndicate; it was not a good place to be. Her father, when he praised the work of the anarcho-syndicalists, was praising the work of male anarcho-syndicalists, not of females; despite belonging to a syndicate with ideas where were deeply anarchistic and libertarian, the patriarchal values which were deeply rooted in society at that time could not disappear overnight.

The problems between father and daughter arose when Pepita began to have a position involving responsibility in the syndicate, and she got home late because she had a lot of work to do or because she was participating in the assemblies which were held after the end of the working day. Since she was so young her father did not allow her to arrive home so late. Pepita explains how she decided to talk to her father on an equal level, as two workers who were both members of the same syndicate which was fighting for the emancipation of female and male workers and for a new and more just, free and egalitarian society. She thought that the arguments she would give to her father had to be the same ones which she had always heard from him when he was talking about the CNT militants. *I used dialogue and it went well* (P).

Pepita agreed with her father that he could go and pick her up from the syndicate so he could see what she was doing and the large responsibility which had now been assigned to her. Her father went to pick her up in Calle de Carme, where the headquarters of the syndicate was. That was the one and only day when he went to pick her up. When he arrived he found that Pepita was very busy and completely involved in her work. She asked him to sit down and to wait until she had finished. She left him sitting on a chair and when she remembered that her father was waiting she went back to see him but he was no longer there. Her father had understood completely what his daughter had told him about the large degree of responsibility which she now had and that she was part of the group of people who, in short, were

the people he had praised so many times in front of her. He realised that society was changing and that his daughter, along with a great deal of other women, was carrying out an important role in as far as it was possible to do so. From that day on, Pepita's father was full of pride in front of his friends about the fact that his daughter was directly participating in the revolutionary task which was being carried out. On the 19<sup>th</sup> of July 1936, when they were starting to organise the columns to go to the front line, she got on one of the trucks which were going to the front in Aragon. She was only 16. In the end her companions convinced her to get out of the truck: she was too young and she would be more useful in the rearguard. Throughout the Social Revolution and the Civil War Pepita remained active within Libertarian Youth, the CNT and, later, in the Free Women Regional Committee for Catalonia, where she was the secretary for propaganda. This position involved travelling around the whole of Catalonia in order to cooperate in the organisation of other Free Women groups.

In 1936 Sara would turn 17, and she had a boyfriend who was a teacher. He had asked her parents for her hand in marriage without asking her, and her parents had given their consent. Once Sara's father had given his permission for his daughter's marriage, the teacher communicated what he had said to her parents and what they had said in response. Initially Sara was surprised that a decision like that, one related to her own life, had been made without taking her into account, without them having asked her what she wanted to do. However she thought that if it was normal for everyone to get married; then she would have to do so too.

At that time women were brought up to get married, have children and to have a family: she had no choice. It was not that Sara rejected this idea, but she felt that she wanted to make her own decisions related to her life, and that it was she, not her father or her boyfriend, who should decide who she should marry and have children and a family with, and when. Added to this was the fact that Sara's boyfriend, who at the same time was her little brother's teacher, said to the child, in a derogatory way, that his father was a revolutionary (her father was also a member of the CNT). When Sara found this out she became very angry and decided to end her relationship with the teacher.

Sara felt, as she says herself, that the Revolution meant that she was born twice.

I didn't understand that attitude... "He has to marry her" because her parents had said so. I would have got married because the one who was my boyfriend, who was a schoolteacher, went to ask my parents for my hand in marriage. My parents said yes and he came and said to me "listen I've asked your parents for your hand and they said yes" but I didn't know anything, well, I thought, all women get married so I will also. I didn't know anything, but later I wised up and realised that the person who had to make decisions about me was myself. Ignorance is the reason a great majority of women accepted their submission (S).

In July 1936, within this context, women went out onto the streets along with men and started to participate in all of the actions which previously they had been excluded from and had to be silent on, and they had the opportunity to express what

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they thought and decide without other people making decisions for them. Within a context where everyone was working to make the new society work, a society which was based on more egalitarian and freer relationships, women were becoming visible because they wanted to be and because they knew that they could be. Sara insisted that what the Social Revolution meant for those who *experienced it was that the Revolution opened up so many doors for us...we could do and say as we wanted, before we couldn't, we completely changed*. The women who went out onto the streets and who subsequently organised themselves via the Revolutionary Committees were of all different ages. These women were daughters, mothers, grandmothers, worker women, village women, and all of them had been put, not only into a secondary position, but also into an invisible position.

Sara's father was also a member of the CNT but, in contrast to Pepita's house, in her house no-one ever talked about politics: "in my house no-one ever talked about ideas, despite the fact that my father had always followed ideas and had been in prison because of his beliefs." Sara's father was a victim of the great repression which militants and anarchist activists went through from the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, up until a few years before the Revolution. After getting out of prison he married Sara's mother and she made him promise that in their house he would never talk about his beliefs and that he would leave the CNT. For this reason, the CNT and her father's beliefs were never talked about in their home, but Sara knew that, although it was not made evident at home, her father continued to be faithful to his beliefs and was active within the CNT.

Nevertheless, after the events of the 19<sup>th</sup> of July 1936, Sara was sure that she wanted to take active part in them and that she wanted to go to the front line with her father.

Two or three days after the Revolution started, before my father went to the front line he said: "child, look, I'm going to the front, tell your mother tomorrow, but don't tell her anything today so that she doesn't get worried" and I said to him "well I want to go with you" and he said to me "no, no, not you because you are too young" "but I want to do something for the Revolution" and he said to me "if you want to do something for the Revolution lets go to the Revolutionary Committee". So then we went to the Revolutionary Committee and he saw two of his companions there, one was called Miret, and the other one was called "Pompeyo Rosquillas" and he said to them "look, this is my daughter who wants to do something for the Revolution" and one of them said to me "very well companion" Oh! What happiness that gave me, when they called me "companion". It made me jump, I don't know, they were calling me "companion". It was very important to me because they had never said that word to me. And they asked me "are you scared?" and I said "no, what needs to be done?", "In Los Federales (it was a café called Los Federales, where all the companions from there met up) we have a nurse in case wounded people come in during the night, and at the moment, we don't have anyone. That nurse is just about to give birth, you will replace her" and I said: "Yes" and then, just imagine, at the slightest sound I went to the door throughout the entire night, just in case they were

bringing a wounded person in or a wounded person was about to arrive. I left at half past seven in the morning and I did not go home until the next day at 8am. That was already a type of freedom, already something different, don't you think? It was me who had decided to go and do something for the Revolution (S).

Sara remembers the moment when she became aware of the importance of the transformations which were happening. After a while, one evening in the month of November, her father returned to Barcelona from the front line, with leave for little more than 24 hours. The night when her father returned, Sara was with her younger two brothers in a Libertarian Youth assembly. When she returned home in the small hours, they came across their father coming down the street. She thought that he would be angry, it was one in the morning and they were just coming back from the Libertarian Youth premises which were on Calle *Provença* at right angles to Calle *Entença*. They lived near Calle *París*, there was a certain amount of distance between their house and the Libertarian Youth premises. However, her father did not get angry, he asked them if they had finished, they replied that they had and then he said to them: "well, let's go home then". Sara was very surprised. Before the Revolution, she had never left the house without asking her mother and father for permission, especially at night. If she went out, she had to be home by nine at the latest. Sara explained that at that moment she became aware of the change in her life.

Until then I had not realised the drastic change that I had gone through (...) then I realised that I had changed a lot, that it was me who was deciding... (S).

Following the battle initiated previously by other revolutionary women such as Alejandra Kollontai, Rosa Luxemburgo and Clara Zetkin, in Spain there were those who defended the belief that if women organised themselves only in syndicates it would not be enough for their complete emancipation. This was because women were experiencing specific situations involving inequality, it was necessary to be organised in order to deal with them. Women were in a situation of inequality not only because they were workers, but also due to the profound gender inequalities that had become deep-rooted throughout the history of humanity. This was the position defended by Free Women.



## CHAPTER 2

### **FREE WOMEN CREATING MEANING IN THEIR BATTLE AS WORKER WOMEN**

A great deal of the women from the libertarian movement who actively participated in the Social Revolution and the emancipation of women, did not initially believe that women had to carry out a specific battle for women. People in agreement with this position, believed that the emancipation of women would happen as a consequence of the Social Revolution, which was what was generally thought within the CNT. Both Sara and Pepita were very sure that they belonged to a social class, the working class, which was repressed, and that together, all of the workers, would have to fight via the Social Revolution to create a new society in which there was no hierarchy or power relations. However, as they themselves witnessed, the Social Revolution did not lead to women reaching the same position in society as men.

Sara stated that the first time she heard about the existence of Free Women, she did not agree with the fact that there was an organisation specifically for women within the libertarian movement, in concurrence with what Pepita also thought.

Oh, Pepita (Sara sighed in remembrance of Pepita) ...and then when the Free Women came to our neighbourhood... Pepita and I did not agree with Free Women! (...) we thought: but a Free Women's group? What is a Free Women's group for? If the battle is everyone's, freedom is for everyone, all together. We didn't understand that. We didn't understand it. Well I didn't go to the meeting because I had this course to do (a shorthand course), but there were other meetings and I didn't want to accept the invitation because I didn't understand why women had to have a separate battle. If freedom is for everyone then we all have to defend it (S).

Pepita stated that she didn't see the point of the existence of a specific organisation for women either.

I shared the opinion of all libertarians; that both men and women together, were fighting for the complete emancipation of the individual. In Spain we had the Confederación Nacional del Trabajo [National Workers Confederation] an anarcho-syndicalist syndicate, the Federación Anarquista Ibérica [Iberian Anarchist Federation] and the Federación Ibérica de Juventudes Libertarias [Iberian Libertarian Youth Federation]. The latter was a type of militant and cultural school for young people where we familiarized ourselves with anarchist ideas. According to those ideals there should have been no segregation of the sexes, but theory is one thing, and reality another. (Berenguer, et al., 1999:75).<sup>1</sup>

Free Women was the first women's organisation within Spain to approach the situation of women's inequality from a class perspective as well as a gender perspective. In addition to this Free Women was also differentiated from other women's organisations in the workers movement, because it was not dependent on any political party or syndicate (Nash, 1981).

Free Women was founded before the events of July 1936. It was not one of the organisations which sprang up as a result of the war, although the Civil War did set out the direction which they ended up taking. The aim of the organisation was always "the liberation of women from their triple slavery: slavery through ignorance, slavery as a worker and slavery as a woman". However the position Free Women took defended the Social Revolution and was not affiliated with initiatives which exclusively worked towards winning the war and defending a Republic which limited itself to creating a State which did not take the interests of either the working class or the most humble country people into account.

The organisation was founded in April 1936 by a group of women who were about to start publishing a magazine on social and cultural issues, which aimed to be of interest to worker women. Lucía Sánchez Saornil, Mercedes Comaposada Guillén and Amparo Poch and Gascón were amongst these women, and they all collaborated with the anarchist press. In September 1936 the Grupo Cultural Femenino de Barcelona [Barcelona Female Cultural Group], a group of worker women with a libertarian ideology, joined the Madrid association which was already called Free Women. Over the following two years associations began to be founded throughout the Republican zone, organising around 20.000 women (in around 147 associations approximately), thus becoming the first female worker and country worker women's movement which mobilized thousands of women. These women organised themselves in order to overcome the triple slavery of worker women and became a point of reference for every women's movement which has subsequently fought to overcome gender inequality. The first National Free Women's Conference was held in Valencia in August 1937, and in that meeting they decided to organise it into local groups which represented Provincial and Regional Committees and to join them together into a Free Women's National Committee.

Free Women believed that the Social Revolution was the only framework within which the liberation of women would be possible, since it would allow for a transformation in people's socialization processes, prioritizing values which would overcome power relations. However setting the Social Revolution in motion was not enough; there was an urgent need to specifically work on the transformation of liberating processes for women.

As has been indicated previously, once the events of the Social Revolution had taken place, both Sara and Pepita experienced situations within the libertarian movement itself in which discrimination against women continued, simply due to the fact they wanted their voices to be heard by making their demands public. Those events meant that they both changed their views and started to believe that it was necessary to have a battle specifically for women, in order to overcome the discrimination they were subjected to.

Sara, as has been mentioned previously, did not initially feel attracted to the idea of the existence of a specific group for women. Her reaction to this group was a little negative. However one day she decided to go to one of the talks which a member of Free Women was giving in the Libertarian Youth premises in Les Corts. When she reached the notice boards where the talk was advertised, Sara came across some of the boys from the Libertarian Youth group who were making male chauvinist comments, and laughing and demeaning not only the companion who was going to give the talk, but the Free Women organisation. Sara remembers how she then became more interested in listening to it:

Then I said to myself “ah, well I’m going”, and I went. When I went in there was a group of young boys of our age who were in front of the notice board criticising it. Criticising the reason why some women were going to give a conference “who do they think they are?”, “what are they going to say?!” As if women did not have the right to think and to say what we felt and we were not able to organise anything. Until then they had not realised, we were all together and did everything together, putting up posters...organising conferences, etc. They had not noticed the difference. But as soon as there was a group of women who had organised an event which they had not participated in, this then offended them and that made me so angry...and I said to myself “but we are the same! We have the same rights and the same beliefs as they do, or even more, no?” and when the talk finished there was a debate and I defended women the way I needed to defend them. It was from then on that I realised that women have to make an effort to vindicate our personalities, because while I was in the neighbourhood Revolutionary Committee I did not realize that it was necessary to take different action so that our thoughts and action would be taken into account (S).

This situation meant that strength was awoken in Sara, which she would always react with when faced with injustice. But that time, as she explains, was different. That time the injustice being experienced by her companion was not due to the fact she was a worker, but due to the fact that she was a women and, furthermore, the people who were the cause of the injustice were her companions from the Libertarian Youth group itself. She had always considered those companions to be revolutionary, since they were in an organisation which was part of the libertarian movement, of which she was also a member.

Sara thinks that until women were marginalised, they had not taken the initiative in organisations and they participated to a lesser or a greater extent in the social battle which was being promoted by men themselves, and there was no problem. However as soon as it was women themselves who decided upon the type of activities and battles that they wanted to carry out, men thought that women may diminish their authority, and that the authority and power which they had had up until then was being called into question. She remembers that before then she had never stopped to think consciously about whether she had experienced any kind of discrimination due to being a woman. She had always participated under conditions of equality in various activities within the Revolutionary Committee and in Libertarian Youth.

The contradiction she experienced in that situation was what made her reflect. It was a contradiction, because injustice was being promoted by companions from the libertarian movement itself. She thought...*but to be a libertarian and an anarchist is that not to want a society with no power relations, a society in which everyone has the same freedom and equality?* However she was beginning to realize that it was not so, that there was something else, the fact that women were not taken into account and that this attitude had been generalised, so generalised that it even happened within the libertarian movement itself. That is when she changed direction in her battle as a worker woman, and in her fight as a woman for a new society. The battle, from that moment on, did not simply have the objective of fighting to achieve an egalitarian and free society. The battle took on a double-meaning. To fight to ensure that society would be truly egalitarian and free meant that women also needed to be the direct protagonists of their own battles in order to leave the silence which had kept them relegated to the margins of society, far behind.

(...) From then on I started to think about what Free Women thought, deep down I had been a free woman but without knowing it. When I realised that I said to myself, no, no we women have to defend ourselves. Then I understood that Free Women didn't want to be feminists (she relates this term to bourgeois feminism which is explained later), but to be feminine and to raise women to the same level as men, so that both men and women could fight for freedom. Before the war there were often conferences or meetings and women in Spain, all over the place...in Catalonia in particular, there were a lot of weavers, a lot of fabric factories...women worked as much as the men did. If in any of the meetings women asked to be heard, some man from the CNT would have said to her "go and wash the dishes!" yes, yes "go and cook!" Women worked just as much as men, they had to defend the fact they had an equal salary, so "why not let them be heard? They had a point, why not eh? And it was then that we realised. That is what Free Women was looking for; to approach every woman so that she could get away from that submission and move forward (S).

She believed that fighting for women's freedom, in order for it to be taken into account to the same extent as men's freedom, did not involve fighting against men, but it involved women organising themselves so that they could achieve this recognition. She started to remember other situations she had experienced in which women had been humiliated simply because they were women. Until then she had not consciously thought about it. But that day it was so clear that for her it meant overturning the meaning of her battle in order to achieve the society which anarchists want when they say: *We carry a new world in our hearts.*

When Sara listened to the mockery of those boys from the Libertarian Youth she felt the same fury and helplessness which she had felt years before. She was very young when she started work in the Ninot Market in Barcelona. This is a feeling which she had forgotten until then, and which re-emerged with the same strength of feeling as when she had experienced it at the age of 13. Every morning she had to go to the market's cold stores to collect the meat which she had to take

to the market stall where she worked. Each stall had one cold store. They were at the end of a long narrow corridor, so that the cold temperature would not escape by constantly opening and closing the entrance door to the cold stores. She frequently came across a man who also worked in the market when she was in this corridor. When they passed each other, he would sexually harass her by putting his hands on her breasts. Sara was loaded down and her arms were full with the things she was carrying, so she could not defend herself. Even so, she did try to defend herself by either biting him or in whatever way she could. In time she realised that this man always waited until she went into the corridor, so that he could then go in and sexually harass her. From then on Sara tried to go into the corridor when someone else who was not the man was in it.

(...) Resentment which had lain dormant in me then awoke. That rage and fury transformed my passivity. If until that moment nothing had separated us (men and women), why did that attitude awaken the memory I had in me of male chauvinist actions which I had forgotten about? (S).

(...) But you do not see those things until it happens right in front of you. Because over the first few days I didn't see any difference, but later I did see it, yes (S).

I had not been in agreement with the idea of separating men from women in our shared battle. When I heard those unpleasant and derogatory comments about women, I let loose and defended them passionately; in such a way that when the debate was over, since they had to appoint a delegate to attend the Local Federation meeting, they chose me (S).

Pepita, as has previously been mentioned, did not see any point in a specific battle for women initially either. She had been involved in the CNT and in Libertarian Youth from a young age and she had always considered herself to be equal to her companions. However, deep down, when she was experiencing a situation in which women were being discriminated against simply due to being women even within the libertarian movement itself, she had sometimes reflected on the situation. Because of this, on more than one occasion she stood up to one of her companions, defending the ability of all women to participate in and organise any type of activity within the movement.

I already had this battle in mind when I was in Libertarian Youth because I found that despite the fact that everyone was an anarchist, it did not fulfil my expectations, you understand? And of course, well I was fighting a battle amongst my companions at that time. Afterwards Mercedes Comaposada and Lucía Sánchez Saornil set up this group and I said to myself I'll go along and see if this corresponds to what I think and, effectively, it was the way I thought it would be, because it was not about...because a lot of the male companions fear it even today, they fear that women want to dominate men and that is not the case, it is about fighting together to achieve a new type of society, at least in my way of thinking no? and of course that fear that we would take away their privilege of being on top, well! We had a lot of

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arguments! Also they never wanted to include us in the libertarian group of associations: the CNT, the FAI [Iberian Anarchist Federation], the FIJL [Iberian Libertarian Youth Federation] and we could not get them to put Free Women in that group. We would say to them “well it is a libertarian group, we are libertarians why do you not include Free Women, since we are anarchists?” there was no way (to make them listen)...despite all that progress one can not move forward as fast as one would like (P).

What made Pepita finally decide to be part of the Free Women organisation, was a proposal made by Libertarian Youth: they wanted to create a Female Secretariat within their Federation. Pepita did not understand why it was necessary to create a Female Secretariat if Free Women already existed: *Why create a Female Secretariat and reject the work which Free Women was doing?* Pepita was afraid that this secretariat would be based on the interests of the organisation and not based on the interests of women. If there was already a women’s organisation within the libertarian movement, why was it not entirely accepted by some of the men in the movement who, on the other hand, were suggesting the creation of a Female Secretariat? Did they really want to create this secretariat so that women could fight for their freedom, for their independence? Or would it be a secretariat which met the interests of Libertarian Youth (or of some men in the movement) as had occurred in certain political parties? Pepita decided that she had to find out herself about what Free Women were doing, in order to later decide where and how to start the battle. This is how she describes it in a fragment taken from the book entitled:

I remember that in 1937 a companion called Pilar Grangel came along one day to our premises in order to establish initial contact and suggest that we joined Free Women. We had a meeting about it. The female companions who were there, including myself, did not welcome the proposal. In 1939, when the said companion was in Montpellier, in France, we talked about it a few times and she remembered that her proposal was rejected.

On the other hand and due to the situation being experienced, she decided one day that a Female Secretariat had to be created in the heart of the F.I.J.L [Iberian Libertarian Youth Federation]. However I reacted immediately to such a proposal; I could not conceive of the fact that in the heart of Libertarian Youth there could be such a secretariat, even if it was something which already existed amongst the communists, the socialists and all the “ists” which swarmed around during the war. Also I thought that Free Women already existed as a feminist group and that they were anarchists.

The proposal to create the said secretariat was accepted. Encarna Jiménez and I were appointed as secretaries of the Local Federation, an appointment which I immediately rejected, and Encarna accepted.

This agreement was the reason for my entry into Free Women at the end of 1937, I think, after the companions there had already done a lot of work. Later, Libertarian Youth themselves, on little sheets of paper which they wrote read as follows: “In the last Regional Conference in Catalonia our

Female Secretaries came out into the open and they deserved the condemnation of the entire Conference (Berenguer et al., 1999:75–76).

(...) When I was with my companions (Free Women) I could perceive how well founded the group was, the vision that we had, and the fact that it was easier to express ourselves in front of each other (...) None of our companions were rejected, on the contrary, we wanted everyone to be present in all of the debates which concerned all of us, and the discussions we had amongst us all were very positive (P).

Both Pepita and Sara believed that the fact that there was a specific group for women scared men. They explained that to some of their male companions from the movement it meant handing over some of the protagonism which they previously had. Also, they had no confidence in the abilities of their female companions either. They both insisted that the fight for the emancipation of women was not a battle against men, but a battle to ensure that women could also take the role of the protagonist through participation in all aspects of social life, so that they would be listened to and that their voices would be recognised in those spaces:

I was a member of Libertarian Youth. I had been the secretary of my section but of course afterwards, when Free Women was formed, I said to myself I'll go and see if it is...if it corresponds more to what I am looking for than the rest, and yes, when I was inside, I realised that it was necessary to have a women's group in order to change the situation, you understand? It was difficult for us, of course it was difficult for us...Male chauvinism is very pronounced in Spain don't you think? Or it was, I don't know if it is now, I don't know any of the contemporary Spanish people any more (she laughed) (P).

We clarified the reason for being part of Free Women. To be a Free Woman is to be liberated from everything, from male chauvinism and from everything. But it was also the fact that people should take us into consideration as females to the same extent as men, not to replace them but to fight together to create a new society, and that is some subject, that is some subject there... because we had problems with our male companions themselves. (...) these things, if you don't think about them carefully you are not immediately aware of them. That is when the time for reflection comes (P).

#### NOTES

<sup>1</sup> *Mujeres Libres. Luchadoras libertarias* was written by Sara Berenguer in the 1990's, and contained testimonies from a group of women who had taken part in Free Women between 1936 and 1939. In 1999 it was published by the Fundación de Estudios Libertarios Anselmo Lorenzo [Anselmo Lorenzo Foundation for Libertarian Studies]. The book contains Free Women texts from 1936–1938 (articles from their magazine, manifestos, statutes and texts written by women who were members of the organisation) as well as texts written more recently or while in exile by women who also formed part of the organisation.