

Editing the Revolution: Feminine Cartographies of Anarchist Culture. Anarchist Women Editors: Political Biographies in the Feminine, Campanella et al. (Eds.)

Editar la revolución: cartografías en femenino de la cultura anarquista. Anarquistas editoras: biografías políticas en femenino, Campanella et al. (Eds.)

Editar a revolução: cartografias no feminino da cultura anarquista. Anarchist Women Editors: Political Biographies in the Feminine, Campanella et al. (Eds.)

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Abstract

Anarquistas editoras: biografías políticas en femenino (Miguelañez y Campanella, 2025) engages with the renewed historiographical interest in the anarchist cultural project of the early twentieth century by shifting attention to women's participation in libertarian print culture. The volume moves from individual trajectories to female editorial networks, expanding the notion of editorial practice beyond books and periodicals to include translation, illustration, and reading communities. In doing so, it not only recovers figures marginalized by historiography but also foregrounds the material, fragmented, and often precarious conditions of their interventions, avoiding their idealization. Rather than merely filling a historiographical gap, the book repositions these experiences within a political genealogy that critically interrogates contemporary articulations between feminism, culture, and social transformation.

Keywords: Anarchism, anarchist women, popular print culture, feminism, history, social class, working class culture.

Resumen

Anarquistas editoras: biografías políticas en femenino (Miguelañez y Campanella, 2025) se inscribe en el renovado interés por el proyecto cultural anarquista de principios del siglo XX, desplazando la mirada hacia la participación de las mujeres en la cultura impresa libertaria. El volumen articula un recorrido que va de las trayectorias individuales a las redes editoriales en femenino, ampliando la noción de práctica editorial más allá del libro o el periódico hacia espacios como la traducción, la ilustración o la sociabilidad lectora. Desde esta perspectiva, no solo recupera figuras relegadas por la historiografía, sino que atiende a las condiciones materiales, fragmentarias y precarias de su intervención, evitando su idealización. En este sentido, el libro no se limita a llenar un vacío historiográfico, sino que reinscribe estas experiencias en una genealogía política que interpela críticamente las formas contemporáneas de articulación entre feminismo, cultura y transformación

social.

Palabras clave: Anarquismo, cultura popular impresa, culturas obreras, clase social, feminismo, mujeres anarquistas, historia.

Resumo

Anarquistas editoras: biografias políticas en femenino (Miguelañez y Campanela, 2025) insere-se no renovado interesse historiográfico pelo projeto cultural anarquista do início do século XX, deslocando o foco para a participação das mulheres na cultura impressa libertária. O volume articula um percurso que vai das trajetórias individuais às redes editoriais no feminino, ampliando a noção de prática editorial para além do livro ou do periódico, incluindo espaços como a tradução, a ilustração e as comunidades de leitura. Nesse sentido, não apenas recupera figuras marginalizadas pela historiografia, mas também evidencia as condições materiais, fragmentárias e frequentemente precárias de suas intervenções, evitando sua idealização. Assim, o livro não se limita a preencher uma lacuna historiográfica, mas reinscreve essas experiências em uma genealogia política que interpela criticamente as articulações contemporâneas entre feminismo, cultura e transformação social.

Palavras-chave: Anarquismo, cultura impressa popular, culturas da classe trabalhadora, classe social, feminismo, mulheres anarquistas, história.

Over the past decade, a strand of critical historiography has developed a significant interest in what has been termed the “anarchist cultural project” of the early twentieth century (Caamaño & Fernández, 2025; Civantos, 2015, 2022; Fernández, 2022, 2024; Margarucci & Fernández, 2024). This suggestive label encompasses the editorial revolution driven by the anarchist movement, which entailed a fundamental shift in paradigm: the instrumentalization of culture as a tool for social transformation. In this sense, understanding “the cultural as an *activating gesture* against the dominant conception” (Civantos, 2022, p. 12) allows culture to be conceived as a field of symbolic production. However, it has often been overlooked that “the history of the dense, heterogeneous, and transnational anarchist print culture is also written in the feminine” (Miguelañez & Campanela, 2025, p. 1).

This is precisely the starting premise of the collective volume *Anarquistas editoras: biografias políticas en femenino*, published in 2025 (Miguelañez & Campanela) by Comares. Indeed, “anarchism granted a central importance to culture and education [...] as key instruments of its emancipatory project” (Miguelañez & Campanela, 2025, p. 200). This is evidenced by the proliferation of journals published at the time, as well as by the significant number of writers -and, notably, women writers- who published short novels in collections such as *La Novela Ideal*, linked to *La Revista Blanca* (Pulpillo, 2020).

The Spanish proletariat came to discover that the workers' press was a vehicle for education more attuned to its own conditions and "closer to its aspirations... than the much-worn world of 'culture' in general and of the book in particular" (Civantos, 2017, pp. 27–28), thus fostering the emergence of a culture of its own, understood in class terms.

The editors begin from a clear premise: women were present alongside men in all phases of the editorial circuit that structured anarchism. The book addresses a double historiographical debt -both within anarchist studies and the history of feminism- namely, the need to deepen our understanding of contexts of female mobilization and to situate anarchist women within the genealogies of emancipatory struggles across different contemporary settings.

The volume builds on the idea that the anarchist cultural movement, described as one of the major cultural renewals of contemporary Spain (Civantos, 2015), rests on two closely related dynamics: the significant presence and participation of women in this process of renewal... and the importance of this involvement, which "distinguishes anarchism from other transnational movements" (Miguelañez & Campanela, 2025, p. 13).

The centrality of women has already been highlighted by various studies on the anarchist editorial project. Thus, Greene (1998), in her analysis of *La Revista Blanca* -one of the main driving forces behind the "process of ideological awareness among the working classes" (p. 106)- emphasizes that one of the key aims of this cultural project was "to inform and educate women in order to incorporate a conscious female proletariat into the development of a culture of its own" (p. 107).

Similarly, Antonio Orihuela (2024, p. 29) notes that women "occupied a privileged space within anarchist publications." It is precisely this phenomenon that has been characterized as a "revolution within the revolution" (Miguelañez & Campanela, 2025, p. 199), insofar as, within the anarchist project itself, women linked to *Mujeres Libres* (Vicente, 2025), among other initiatives, articulated a political practice that can be understood as a genuine feminist revolution.

The reasons for directing attention toward the female cartography proposed by this volume are therefore more than justified. The book arises from the need to develop the biographies of these women, previously mentioned in other studies but insufficiently examined in depth. As the editors explain, the project originated from two key events: the international conference "Women Editors and Translators Beyond Borders: Women in Transnational Anarchist Print Culture (1890–1939)" (Universidad Carlos III de Madrid & Universitat Oberta de Catalunya, 2024) and the exhibition organized by the Fundación Anselmo Lorenzo (2024), *Moldeadoras de la idea: Mujeres en la cultura impresa anarquista*, which opened "new avenues for analysis and research around anarchist print cultures" (Miguelañez & Campanela, 2025, p. 3).

The figures addressed in this volume, however, differ from those most frequently highlighted in the critical canon. Rather than returning to well-known names such as Soledad Gustavo (Puente et al., 2024) or Federica Montseny, the focus shifts toward women for whom, as the editors themselves acknowledge, the label "editor" might be excessive, given that their editorial activity was "occasional or

limited to a few volumes or short-lived periodicals” (Miguelañez & Campanela, 2025, p. 3). These are women excluded,

perhaps because they spoke from socially silenced positions and from enunciative subjects likewise condemned to silence [...] and, among so many like them, they have largely disappeared from historical discourse, which is all the more regrettable given that their biographies speak clearly of the difficulties of being both a woman and an anarchist at the time (Miguelañez & Campanela, 2025, p. 150).

In this sense, their trajectories are not comparable to that of Montseny, to whom, according to Orihuela (2024, p. 27), around fifty short narratives published in anarchist journals are attributed.

Formally, the volume is around two approaches that move from the individual to the collective. The first section examines the role of “women in the anarchist editorial circuit” from a particularized perspective. This section highlights five key figures -such as María Lacerda de Moura-whose trajectories are analyzed following a similar pattern: an account of their lives and, especially, of the moment when these intersect with the anarchist editorial circuit, focusing on the specific roles they played within it. This approach allows for the reconstruction not only of life trajectories but also of specific forms of participation that complicate the very notion of “editor.”

The second axis broadens the perspective and shifts attention toward a more relational dimension, based on “female editorial networks.” Here, the analysis focuses on collective experiences such as the *Gruppo Emancipazione della Donna*, composed of Italian editors in New Jersey, or the anarchist editorial circuits in Montevideo and their connections with other enclaves in the Río de la Plata, revealing networks of collaboration and sociability that transcend national frameworks and consolidate a transnational editorial practice.

What is most compelling about the volume lies not only in its object of study but in the shift it proposes within the field itself. While “the history of anarchist publishing has experienced a notable boom in the last decade” (Miguelañez & Campanela, 2025, p. 6), it is only now that research begins to move beyond the book, pamphlet, or newspaper as its sole axes of analysis. The volume thus opens a line of inquiry oriented toward “other fundamental aspects of the anarchist universe” (2025, p. 8), such as translation, illustration, photography, or modes of reading. In doing so, it not only expands the notion of the anarchist cultural project but also demonstrates the symbolic reach of anarchism in the public sphere (2025, pp. 7-10).

In a present in which feminism risks becoming institutionalized to the point of losing its transformative edge -fragmented into discourses that do not always succeed in articulating or sustaining political practices- the recovery of these genealogies cannot be read as a neutral gesture. There is a direct interpellation here. Returning to these women is not merely an exercise in historiographical restitution; it is a way of confronting the present with other forms of doing politics, building community, and intervening in culture from subaltern positions. Against narratives that tend to emphasize the exceptional or even mythical dimension of these experiences, *Anarquistas editoras* offers a more

situated approach, attentive to the material conditions of editorial work, its discontinuities, and its limits.

In this sense, the book not only recovers names and trajectories but also resists the temptation to turn these genealogies into closed or exemplary narratives. Instead, it presents them in their fragmentary and precarious character and, precisely for that reason, as profoundly political: not as models to be imitated, but as historically situated practices shaped by tensions, contradictions, and specific material conditions.

Anarquistas editoras: biografías políticas en femenino fills a gap while simultaneously destabilizing an established narrative and compelling us to rethink what we do today with these legacies. If the book makes anything clear, it is that these forms of action do not belong solely to the past: they remain, potentially, a political tool yet to be activated.

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