

**Bryn Mawr College**  
**Scholarship, Research, and Creative Work at Bryn Mawr**  
**College**

---

Growth and Structure of Cities Faculty Research  
and Scholarship

Growth and Structure of Cities

---

1993

Review of *Red City, Blue Period: Social Movements in Picasso's Barcelona*, by Temma Kaplan

Gary W. McDonogh

Bryn Mawr College, [gmcdonog@brynmawr.edu](mailto:gmcdonog@brynmawr.edu)

[Let us know how access to this document benefits you.](#)

Follow this and additional works at: [http://repository.brynmawr.edu/cities\\_pubs](http://repository.brynmawr.edu/cities_pubs)

 Part of the [Architecture Commons](#), [History of Art, Architecture, and Archaeology Commons](#), and the [Urban Studies and Planning Commons](#)

---

#### Custom Citation

McDonogh, Gary W. Review of *Red City, Blue Period: Social Movements in Picasso's Barcelona*, by Temma Kaplan. *American Historical Review* 98 (1993): 186-187, doi: 10.2307/2166460.

This paper is posted at Scholarship, Research, and Creative Work at Bryn Mawr College. [http://repository.brynmawr.edu/cities\\_pubs/13](http://repository.brynmawr.edu/cities_pubs/13)

For more information, please contact [repository@brynmawr.edu](mailto:repository@brynmawr.edu).

CLAIRE ANDRIEU. *La banque sous l'occupation: Paradoxes de l'histoire d'une profession, 1936-1946*. Paris: Fondation Nationale des Sciences Politiques. 1990. Pp. 331.

Claire Andrieu's book is a great deal narrower than is suggested by the rather misleading title. It examines the turn to corporatist regulation during the Occupation and after the Liberation and explains why those bankers who had opposed regulation (which they described as the "socialization of credit") most vigorously in 1936 under the Popular Front later came to accept it. The main focus is on the banking laws of 1941 and 1945. The laws of June 13 and 14, 1941, created a "Professional Committee of Organization" that policed banking practice. In 1945 these laws were supplemented with the nationalization of half of French banking and the planning of industrial financing. Andrieu examines the involvement of a number of individuals during the political changes that took place between 1936 and 1945. He seeks to demonstrate the continuities of the professionalized banking elite and to tell the story of a change in the intellectual environment as ideas about the proper role of the state in finance and in the economy were transformed. Andrieu emphasizes that the new beliefs transcended the political cleavages of the period.

This book belongs to the history of elites rather than to economic history. There is almost no information about the actual role of the banks in the economy of the 1930s and 1940s. The policies of the banks themselves, and their relations with the German occupation authorities and with German banks, are not explored. Perhaps this is because Andrieu had little access to bank archives. But it is odd to have a history of bankers in which banking plays so small a part.

HAROLD JAMES  
Princeton University

TEMMA KAPLAN. *Red City, Blue Period: Social Movements in Picasso's Barcelona*. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press. 1992. Pp. xiv, 266. \$30.00.

Temma Kaplan's narrative brings together the people and events that constituted an extraordinary range of contests for urban expression and public domains in Barcelona between 1888 and 1939. Kaplan focuses on episodes that highlight the intersection of gender, class, and ritual in the evolution of a conflictive urban society. These diverse voices of city life and politics frame her perspective on the work of Pablo Picasso as a distillation of many popular currents as well as elite aesthetic debates within their complex economic, social, and political contexts, local and national. Both in its creative detail and its extensive dialogue with the work of European and American scholars, the book raises challenging questions for Barcelona's social and cultural history as well as more general directions for integrated urban studies

encompassing history, anthropology, geography, and gender studies.

After an overview of the urban symbolic landscape, Kaplan turns to the popular vocabularies available at the turn of the century to express criticism. In contrast to elite control of world's fairs (in 1888 and 1929) and many public institutions, she shows how religious celebrations, strikes, street life, bombings, and funerals distilled popular visions of—and actions on—the industrial city.

Complementing recent trends in Picasso scholarship as well as urban and cultural history, Kaplan shows that artistic developments could not be divorced from these social movements. Careful readings of Santiago Russinyol, Ramón Casas, and other artists involved in Catalan modernism show how such interests as puppetry, the rediscovery of religious and popular art, and the debates of Catalan nationalism participated in changing metropolitan culture.

In her choice of key ritual moments, Kaplan underscores the central role of women as active participants in urban life as organizers, information specialists, and participants in street actions. Moreover, she describes the symbolic status through which women also galvanized a critical consciousness into protests against repression, represented by the mass outpourings surrounding the funerals of young florists killed in police-promoted bombings in 1905. In reconstructing both active and representative roles, Kaplan underscores women as "dangerous" participants in urban life, epitomized in the dichotomy of nun and prostitute that was repeatedly played out in urban streets.

In the early twentieth century, the theaters of urban and national conflict became broader and more violent in major conflagrations, from the church burnings and civil unrest of the Tragic Week of 1909 through later strikes. The underpinnings of both assassinations and ritual protests expressed not only dynamic class relations but also crosscutting tensions between Catalonia and the Spanish state. Here, Kaplan's depictions blend salient individuals with more anonymous collective actions that participated in political and economic evolution.

The concluding chapter examines cultural reactions to the republic and Civil War. The analysis of a Picasso more distant from Barcelona life synthesizes the impact of both popular and elite culture evident in Kaplan's illuminating reading of *Guernica*. A rapid epilogue brings readers up to date on Catalan developments.

Such a broad overview inevitably faces some limits. The reliance on episodic foci creates an occasional imbalance between analytic depth and social continuities where some important contextual features seem reduced to an inactive backdrop. The reader familiar with Barcelona also may be disconcerted by English translations for Catalan topography, while those unfamiliar may construct a misleading cityscape from in felicitous translations such as Gràcia Pass (for

*Passeig de Gràcia*, where “boulevard” seems preferable). Maps integral to arguments are relegated to appendixes, although artistic and photographic representations are quite sensitively integrated into analyses. Indeed, the book proves compelling in its incorporation of the cityscape, both physical and human, into historical study as it illustrates the complex challenges of changing urban topographies and the neighborhood ethnography of class and violence demanded for future research.

Throughout the text, however, Kaplan situates these complicated problems within contemporary concerns of urbanism, art history, and women’s studies as well as particular questions of Catalan scholarship. Thus, published at a time when Barcelona demanded world attention, this book provides an important, evocative vision of the processes that have formed—and continue to shape—the lives of that metropolis and its citizens.

GARY W. McDONOGH  
*Bryn Mawr College*

MARTHA A. ACKELSBURG. *Free Women of Spain: Anarchism and the Struggle for the Emancipation of Women*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press. 1991. Pp. xvi, 229. Cloth \$39.95, paper \$14.95.

When political or religious institutions are undergoing rapid change, questions about women and community frequently come to the fore. This happened when Christianity challenged the late Roman empire, when Quakers and Methodists confronted the established British church, when peoples in Africa, Asia, and Latin America resisted colonization, and in most of the great revolutions of the twentieth century, including the Spanish Civil War. Sometimes the women who participate in these kinds of movements do so without regard for their own particular goals, subordinating their needs as women to those proclaimed as the higher good. At other times, women demand rights for themselves as full members of society.

Martha A. Ackelsberg shows through oral history, judicious use of archival material, and comparative studies of past and contemporary protests, how the Spanish anarchist women’s organization known as *Mujeres Libres* (Free Women) and the newspaper of the same name fought for improvement in the conditions of women as well as the liberation of their communities. As with much of the best history, this study is comparative and analytical, raising questions about anarchism by placing its development in the context of twentieth-century collective action.

The Spanish Civil War from 1936 to 1939 unleashed demands for the revolution anarchists had been expecting for generations. As one of their group contributions, *Mujeres Libres* promoted *capacitación*, the process by which the potential of ordinary women was discovered and then enhanced through educa-

tion and technical training. According to Ackelsberg, *Mujeres Libres* developed the talents of women, training them to assume leadership roles within anarchism as well as to pursue their own needs. *Mujeres Libres* spoke for a self-identified community in which women were equal members, but the movement as a whole did not necessarily share their views.

Although a communitarian focus with its promise of direct democratic control over social resources had enabled anarchism to flourish in Spain by attracting unlettered peasants, seamstresses, bakers, shoemakers, and factory workers, to name only a few, the core leadership during the Civil War came from the National Confederation of Labor (CNT). Its perspective, as with Wobblies in the United States, was that of male workers in heavy industry. The CNT wanted *Mujeres Libres* to collapse its activities into committees that men dominated. Refusing to become a woman’s bureau of the CNT by subordinating the special needs of women into a universal struggle for emancipation that men would define, the organization maintained its autonomy, paying a price for its independence by being denied access to the congresses where policy was determined.

Loyal as it was to anarchism’s general goals, *Mujeres Libres* also expressed the particular experiences of working-class wives and daughters, workers, physicians, and intellectuals. From their perspectives, the movement could not afford to wait until the war was over to transform society by attending to child care, women’s health, and education, since the revolution had to be brought into existence during the course of struggle. Once *capacitación* had empowered women to recognize their interests and to act on them, it could not be stymied.

It is in the context of differences among members of the same movement that the book will be of most interest to scholars of contemporary women’s history. Bringing theoretical concerns very much into the present, Ackelsberg makes a plea for recognition of diversity and of the possibility for activists to hold many identities while pursuing social change. When historians take women’s movements and gender differences in mixed organizations—as distinct from feminist institutions—seriously, this book will become part of the canon. Even now, it represents a forthright effort to view women’s participation in politics in exciting new ways.

TEMMA KAPLAN  
*State University of New York,  
Stony Brook*

HELEN GRAHAM. *Socialism and War: The Spanish Socialist Party in Power and Crisis, 1936–1939*. New York: Cambridge University Press. 1991. Pp. xii, 327.

Spain’s Socialist Party (PSOE) was a key participant in the politics of the Second Republic, headed two civil war governments under Largo Caballero and Juan