

***Madrid Cómico* Confronts Anarchist Bombing Campaigns**

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Founded in 1880, the eight-page weekly newspaper *Madrid Cómico* rapidly established its niche and by 1888 enjoyed a circulation of 10,000. It was distributed and read throughout Spain. In addition to personal subscriptions, it was available in cafés, casinos, barber shops, boarding houses, and street kiosks. *Madrid Cómico* was markedly different from the established press in that its approach was emphatically festive and satirical. It frequently featured a well-known person on its cover, caricatured by an accurate face and head on a doll-sized body. Inside, in addition to a vibrant literary section, there were cartoons, jokes, festive poems, editorial commentary, and short stories.

Madrid had never changed so fast as it did during the first two decades of *Madrid Cómico*'s existence.¹ The mass influx of population, urban renewal, new modes of transportation, poor housing, rising prices, foreign wars, and government inefficiency and corruption provided tensions and challenges. Additionally, *madrileños* also had to suffer two terrifying bombing campaigns: the first by casino owners in 1881, and then the much longer campaign in the 1890s by international anarchists. The aim of the present study is to show how *Madrid Cómico*, the last of the capital's major newspapers to be studied in this respect, strove repeatedly to help the populace cope with the paralyzing terror produced by these two bombing campaigns.

As Michael Schnepf has shown in a study of other Madrid newspapers, the first of the bombing campaigns proceeded from a uniquely Madrilenian circumstance. The gambling casinos of the capital had operated with impunity by bribing top officials of the local government until a new administration began to close all such establishments on 28 February 1881. The owners reacted with "a terrorist campaign in an effort to pressure the Sagasta government to relent" (108). This campaign of bombings continued, with one cessation, from 18 March until 21 June 1881. The cessation occurred because the Madrid authorities expected a large influx of visitors to celebrate the bicentennial of Calderón de la Barca's death. Therefore, they allowed the casinos to reopen so that visitors not be subjected, as one newspaper put it, to the "música y emociones de los petardos" (108).

A week before the Calderón celebration, the 27 March 1881 edition of *Madrid Cómico* showed levity about the bombing campaign. In the weekly introductory column "De todo

un poco,” it first presented an alleged dialogue in which two people discuss the current “[gran] ruido” (Chaves 1).² Only after some time does it become apparent that one of the interlocutors is referring to the robust applause in the theater for José Echegaray’s *El Gran Galeoto*, and the other is commenting on the casino owners’ bombing campaign. Then the columnist himself, Angel Chaves, follows up by claiming to have been witness to a recent street bombing in which a shaken passerby survives with his trousers in tatters. The victim’s condition causes him to think that the bomber was his tailor, trying to drum up new business. Therefore, he hurries off to the tailor shop to demand that the owner furnish him new trousers—on credit (2). The two-fold interest of Echegaray’s play and the bombing campaign returns in subsequent pages. In the center of the issue there is a two-page pencil drawing showing great emotional tension in the faces and demeanor of the actors involved in “Una escena del tercer acto de *El gran Galeoto*” (4-5). The bombing theme then recurs on two subsequent pages in a nine stanza poem by Rafael García y Santisteban entitled “¡Pum, petardo!” Each stanza, some of which reflect a major frustration (marriage, *cesantía*, etc.), ends with an emphatic “¡Pum, petardo!” and the entire poem concludes with the understanding that when justice fails, it is comprehensible that “aunque el fin sea bastardo / dicen: “meteremos ruido.” / ¡Pum, petardo!” (5-6).

In the week following the Calderón bicentennial, *Madrid Cómico* made no mention of the bombing campaign and focused only on the success of the bicentennial celebration. Fortunately, the bombing campaign came to a conclusion (as already noted) a couple of months later with the “discovery of an extensive ring of terrorists, police corruption, government involvement, multiple arrests, and the end of the *petardos*” (Schnepp 108-109).

Madrid Cómico’s confrontation with the casino owners’ bombing terror was a one-time event, but it evidenced a sustained, multiple approach to the problem with its reference to Echegaray’s play, its far-fetched account of the alleged bombing victim who blames his tailor, and the festive nine stanza poem “¡Pum, Petardo!” Importantly, the use of multifaceted humor had been established and this approach will be continued when the paralyzing fear of bombing returns in the next decade.

Webster defines anarchism as “a political theory holding all forms of government authority to be unnecessary and undesirable and advocating a society based on voluntary cooperation and free association of individuals and groups.”³ In addition to the poverty-stricken farm workers of Andalucía, industrial workers embraced anarchism and they established affiliations with workers in other countries. The International Working Men’s Association, often called the First International, was founded in London in 1864, and lasted until 1876. During a brief visit to Madrid and Barcelona in 1868, a representative of the Russian anarchist Mikhail Bakunin founded the *Alianza Internacional de Trabajadores*. At an international meeting in 1881, its multinational leaders “urged a strategy of community warfare against the bourgeoisie through the destruction of property” (Corbin 21). In Spain, remnants of the First International re-emerged in the anarchist-dominated *Federación Regional de Trabajadores*, and as Raymond Carr states further:

[T]he terrorists of propaganda by deed set off a wave of bomb outrages and assassinations, which reached their peak in the 1890s and included the

[7 November, 1893] *Teatro Liceo* bomb-throwing which killed twenty-one theatre-goers, that at the [7 June, 1896] Corpus Christi procession [also in Barcelona] which killed ten bystanders and the [1897] assassination of Cánovas. These outrages [...] horrified opinion and exhibit the nature of anarchist terrorism: the *Liceo* and Corpus Christi procession were symbols of corrupt bourgeois life. The horror the bomb-throwings provoked in bourgeois society evoked drastic police repression and this, in turn, set off the mechanism of anarchist reprisal, which accounted for the assassination of three prime ministers. (441)⁴

The established main-line press, most notably *El Imparcial*, *El Liberal*, and *La Vanguardia* (the latter in Barcelona) preceded *Madrid Cómico* in commenting on anarchist activities, beginning in 1891. Three years later they were joined by *La Correspondencia de España* and *Heraldo de Madrid*. These newspapers established multifaceted precedents against which *Madrid Cómico* chose to react. Luis Izquierdo Labella (65-72, and passim) has detailed how these five periodicals were frequently sensationalist. They liked screaming headlines, gruesome details, emphasis on excruciating emotional reactions, as well as predictions of future terror. Correspondents often telegraphed to their newspapers exaggerations regarding casualties, property damage, incriminating evidence found, and the curtailing of public activities. Izquierdo Labella has shown how each of the five mainline newspapers covered the 21 June 1893 failed bombing attempt at the residence of Conservative Party leader Antonio Cánovas del Castillo, in which one of the perpetrators perished (73-75). Unlike *Madrid Cómico*, other newspapers had foreign correspondents and also quoted the foreign press in order to keep their readers informed of the rampant anarchist activities in other countries. For example, *El Imparcial*, 1 April 1891, has a front-page section entitled “La agitación obrera” with two items: the first from Paris, “por telégrafo de nuestro corresponsal,” and the second, from an Italian news service. The first mentions a “Congreso de mineros,” which concluded without violence; the second reports an assassination attempt on the emperor of Austria.

Clearly *Madrid Cómico* had the opportunity to provide a distinct and much-needed public service by being a counterforce to the mainline press. Before examining how *Madrid Cómico* did so, it will be helpful to consider the columnist who spearheaded this activity, namely Luis Taboada (1848-1904). Habitually out strolling the streets, as well as attending public events, Taboada knew well what was going on and how people felt about what was happening in their city. A committed liberal, he consistently sided with the population in opposition to the stagnation and corruption of the restrictive Restoration government. His column titled “De todo un poco” was, for almost twenty years, always the first item in each issue—and had the tone-setting icon of a small clown. Margot Versteeg has described his column as “joco-serio, a caballo entre lo asertivo del periodismo y la ingeniosidad de la ficción” (144). In addition to writing for other periodicals, Taboada also published plays, short stories, and novels. Often compared to Mariano José de Larra of the 1830s, Taboada was much esteemed throughout Spain.⁵

Madrid Comico perceived the value of anticipating the upcoming International Workers’ Day parades and demonstrations of 1 May, which was a day that also included a very

noticeable increase in military and police presence on the streets of Madrid. In the 18 April 1891 issue, Taboada devoted the second half of his “De todo un poco” column to addressing humorously the fear that everyone was soon to perish “a manos de la anarquía” (2). Although the columnist believes that Madrilenians should be able to go about their routine activities safely on the designated day, he acknowledges that there is widespread fear of the following alleged May 1 timetable:

A las ocho: Gritos subversivos e imprecaciones violentas.

A las diez: Destrucción de las autoridades por medio de la dinamita y el ácido sulfúrico.

A las doce: Demolición del edificio del Banco.

A las dos: Muerte violenta de varios caseros en la Plaza Mayor.

A las tres: Degollina general en todas las calles, callejuelas, y plazas y plazuelas que tiene Madrid.

A las cinco: Banquete de carne humana.

In spite of the government’s attempts to calm the populace, some people like the money lender Don Serapio, and his wife, says Taboada, have already taken to wearing disguises. However, their detractors insist that this will be of no avail, because everyone on the anarchists’ list will be found and murdered. Consequently, the fearful loan shark on Garduña street decides that his only way to survive the mounting tension will be to play his guitar, sing to and dance with his wife, “como si estuviese en el mejor de los mundos posible” (2). This is good advice, Taboada affirms, but he concludes by also acknowledging the pervasiveness of fear gripping the capital, as he admits: “Pero la procesión [pavorosa] anda por dentro, que es lo que pasa a todos los que tenemos algo que perder” (2).

The following year, 1892, *Madrid Cómico* again anticipated the upcoming Workers’ Day manifestations, this time in three consecutive issues. In the 9 April issue, Taboada devoted the entirety of his column to the present state of paralyzing fear in the capital. Citing an undated report by *La Correspondencia*, Taboada details the arrest of two foreign anarchists attempting to plant a bomb in the Congress, and he concludes: “[L]o cierto es que la policía ha evitado una catástrofe y merece aplauso” (2). Nonetheless, he believes, Madrilenians still imagine a bomb on every corner with every passerby to be a dynamiter. A great deal of this problem is caused by the serious newspapers with their “noticias aterradoras” (2). Then Taboada claims one such, unnamed, newspaper, in reporting on the raid of the “Círculo anarquista de la calle de la Cabeza,” has listed all the paraphernalia seized. In addition to such items as false beards and moustaches, terror-inspiring masks, military uniforms, and anarchist banners, there is a violin, which will be played as accompaniment to the “danza de la muerte,” as the terrorist bombing unfolds according to the following priorities: “Voladura primera. El Congreso; idem segunda. El ministro de Gobernación; idem tercera. El Banco; idem cuarta. La posada del Peine, etc. etc.” (2).

Additionally, Taboada criticizes those ladies who have suspended their weekly social gatherings, “porque no quieren excitar con su lujo los feroces instintos de los anarquistas”

(2). However, the lack now of the usual guest-welcoming lighting, the columnist affirms, merely allows the bombers safer access to the property where they may wish to place their bombs. Taboada also affirms that not everyone who threatens violence is a bomber. He cites the alleged case of an attic dweller, who descends to request that those attending a downstairs party make less noise. When the man descends again, he brings not a bomb, but a broom, with which he proceeds to attack the noisemakers, as would Taboada himself—“[y] sin ser anarquista” (2) Nevertheless, the editor concludes: “En fin, el pánico cunde. No les quepa a ustedes duda” (2).

For the following issue (16 April 1892), *Madrid Cómico* lays emphasis on a frontispiece cartoon sketch by graphic artist Ramón Cilla titled “La Agitación Anarquista.” Here armed authorities surprise an anarchist at his writing table in an attic room. The brief dialogue is as follows: “—¡Alto! ¿Qué está usted preparando para el 1.º de Mayo? / —¿Yo? Un soneto dedicado á las víctimas del día siguiente.”⁶ Confirmation that anarchists have indeed been rounded up seems to be confirmed on the next page in Taboada’s “De todo un poco” column as a comical character confides to another during church service that she has “un marido muy bueno; sí, señora; esta mañana tuve que salir a ver si me dejaban conocer a los petardistas presos, y él se quedó en casita lavando unos pañuelos” (2).

For the third and last of the pre-May Day issues (23 April 1892), *Madrid Cómico* had a two-fold approach in their effort to lessen pre-May Day tensions. First, Taboada devotes most of his usual section to an imaginary conversation between himself and an anarchist, as they explore the lack of understanding and mutual support between the bourgeoisie and the working class. Because Taboada has no calluses on his hands, does not work on a scaffold, nor lift and carry heavy objects, but instead writes articles, the anarchist sees no reason why Taboada does not merit extinction. The columnist counters by reviewing his own work history, his lack of health benefits and job security, and emphasizes that he too must work very strenuously to earn a living. Then he concludes “[y]a ven los obreros que todos somos unos y que no es necesario arrancar virutas, conducir baúles para pasar trabajos en este mundo. Y sirva esta pública declaración para que me respeten los anarquistas el día de la matanza” (2).

Madrid Cómico’s second focus in this issue on anarchism occurs four pages later in the following poem by Juan Pérez Zúñiga—which utilizes two meanings of the word *bomba*:

LA OBRA DE UN ANARQUISTA

o

LA BOMBA EN EL PALACIO

—Hola Gil

—Adiós Blas. ¿De dónde vienes

—¿No lo vas a soplar?

¡Qué cosas tienes!

Yo quiero que lo *ignore* mi Venancia;

porque *aluego* me pide la ganancia

y no me queda *pa* pagar la cuota

del *Círculo anarquista* ni una mota.

—Comprendo.

Pus verás. Esta mañana

me legué á la taberna de la Rita

y allí comí un huevo.

—¡Valor se *nesecita!*

—Y después me marché al palacio nuevo

que tiene la condesa de la Rana

en *mitá* de la Fuente Castellana.

llevando, en compañía del *Gazapo*

una bomba cubierta con un trapo.

Llego al sitio. La puerta está abierta

y me cuelo enseguida por la puerta.

Arrimado al *Gazapo*, que es muy listo,

me interno en un jardín, y poco a poco

armado de la bomba y sin ser visto,

en el sitio oportuno la coloco.

¡Qué de angustias pasé! Cuántas rabieta!

Ya sabes que no sirvo para el caso;

pues no me chico si me sale al paso

la ocasión de ganarme unas pesetas.

—¿Pero no te prendieron

Los criados?

—¿A mí? ¡Quiá! Los chavales,

cuando salí de allí ¿sabes que me hicieron?

Pues ponerme en la mano treinta reales.

—¿Y ha estallado la bomba?

¡Baena [sic] es ésa!

¡A ti se te ha subido el aguardiente!

Si la bomba que he puesto mayormente

es una bomba inglesa

aspirante-impelente,

Me arreglé yo en la fragua

Para sacarle a la condesa el agua!

JUAN PÉREZ ZÚÑIGA

The two-man penetration onto aristocratic property in order to plant a bomb in the above poem was a *modus operandi* for anarchists. Confirmation is evidenced in such an attack against Cánovas del Castillo on 20 June 1893, when the bomb exploded prematurely killing one of the would-be assassins (Izquierdo Labella 69).

After the International Workers Day had passed, *Madrid Cómico*'s 7 May 1892 issue afforded a retrospective on its April concerns, contained in a two-page centerfold cartoon sketch with the caption "El 1º De Mayo." This sketch succeeds in capturing and communicating some of the more important aspects of the anarchist-societal conflict. In Ramón Cilla's depiction the workers are marching between two rows of soldiers, the latter with their fixed bayonets and accompanied by a worried-looking officer. The

unlettered proletariat carry a banner proclaiming “Paz Unibersal,” under which is demanded “400000 cabezas [sic] burgeses.” Beneath the entire sketch *Madrid Cómico* gives its own evaluation of the event: “La Manifestación Imponente Y Pácífica Que Acaba De Verificarse” (4-5).

However, on 24 September 1893, an anarchist attempted to assassinate General Martínez Campos, the Capitán General de Cataluña, during a military parade in Barcelona. In its 30 September issue *Madrid Cómico* noted only that “en Barcelona ha estado a punto de perecer el general Martínez Campos” (2), and then it goes on to focus on another topic that is easier to engage humorously. Eventually returning to the assassination attempt, Taboada says that he knows a poverty-stricken, unemployed individual, who, when “le tiran una bomba al general Martínez Campos,” denied needing medical attention for his wife in order to spend the money on a telegram to the general, “ofreciéndole su vida y la de su esposa” (2).

Later the same year, in the 18 November 1893 issue, *Madrid Cómico* had a two-page centerfold with six cartoon drawings under the caption “*Lo de Siempre.*” The largest and most prominently placed cartoon is a bomb explosion, which shows many body parts in the air, underneath all of which is the comment: “Pero estalla una bomba de dinamita en cualquier parte” (4-5). Nevertheless, in his 23 December 1893 column, Taboada once again attempts to mitigate the prevailing fear of anarchist bombings, now by describing an alleged incident during a performance of Wagner’s *Tannhäuser* at the *Teatro Real*. Members of the audience spot a late-arriving, improperly dressed “monstruo con capa verde y sombrero bajo,” who is having trouble finding a seat (2). Believing that he must be an anarchist with a bomb, people begin leaving the theater. However, a timely intervention and questioning by Madrid’s governor reveals that the suspected “anarquista sanguinario” is but a music-loving janitor from the San Francisco el Grande Basilica, who has come with a duly purchased ticket, wearing the only clothing he owns. Thus the audience can return to their seats and Madrid is assured a tranquil night.

Taboada finishes this discussion with continuing humor as he also weaves in a criticism of the municipal police:

No haya, pues, temor de que nos destruyan los anarquistas, pues se ve claramente que la autoridad vela por nosotros, y en cuanto ve un sombrero hongo se conmueve.

El hongo ha sido siempre síntoma de grandes crímenes; por lo cual llegamos a creer que los que roban todas las noches en las cercanías del Dos de Mayo deben llevar sombrero de copa. De otro modo ya hubiera dado con ellos la policía. (2)

However, *Madrid Cómico* chose to finish the year (30 December 1893) on a more realistic note with a page of cartoons, one of which shows the exiting old year carrying on his back a huge bag of afflictions, one part of which is labeled “bombas” (5).

Three years later, with the revolt in Cuba raging—and the United States soon to intervene—the Spanish government had become greatly concerned about the mutual financial, informational, and moral support among Cuban, Spanish, and North American anarchists (Serrano 123-72). Nevertheless, in its 2 May 1896 issue, *Madrid Cómico* was still able to announce with jubilation “[h]a pasado el día 1º sin derramamiento de sangre” (2). Consequently, in the introductory section of “De todo un poco,” Taboada feels free to invent humorous communications pertinent to the holiday. For example, a provincial telegram informs Madrid: “En la calle Ancha estalló a las doce una caja de cerillas inglesas, hiriendo á un inspector en dedo gordo. Adopto precauciones” (2). In an intercepted missive from an anarchist to his wife, the anarchist shares the following: “[N]o me esperes esta noche porque estamos *cospirando* en casa de Chepatorcida y sabe Dios a qué hora acabaremos. Por un sí acaso guárdame la cena, ya sabes que aquí *cospiramos* sin alimentación de ningún género” (2). Among other captured letters, is one, “escrito en sangre y empapado en agua mineral,” from an anarchist to a card-playing friend. He requests payment of money owed and, after speaking of planned arsons and murder, he trusts that his friend will understand that for all this, “necesito ir provisto de fondos” (2). But, Taboada asks, where indeed were the anarchists on 1 de mayo de 1896? Some of the best known, he asserts, have taken their families to rural areas to enjoy tranquility and good food, as now assuredly “[p]oco a poco se van dulcificando las costumbres de nuestro pueblo” (2).

However, the horrendous bombing attack on the Corpus Christi procession in Barcelona the following month (6 June 1896) proved Taboada’s optimism premature. Consequently, he took up the pen one week later (13 June) to emphasize with fabricated examples that certain people obtain a perverse emotional pleasure in the spreading of rumors and in the sending of alarmist telegrams to the capital. Taboada adds that such action is as inappropriate as that of a physician, who might erroneously make a dire prediction about the case of a patient, only to be very soon disappointed with an unexpected recovery, and thus be unable to refrain from exclaiming (inappropriately): “¡Desaprovechar una ocasión tan hermosa para morirse!” (2).

Notwithstanding “el crimen horrible cometido en Barcelona,” Taboada urges Spaniards to resist the “alarmistas,” and concludes:

Bueno que las autoridades vigilen y adopten medidas enérgicas y apliquen la ley con todo rigor; pero me parece ridícula la resolución de muchas personas que han renunciado a asistir a las representaciones teatrales y se hacen servir los comestibles desde el patio, valiéndose de un grúa, y no reciben visitas, y viven en un puro quejido, suponiendo que va estallarles una bomba debajo de la cama.” (2)

However, one of Taboada’s reported rumors will turn out to have historical significance: “que Cánovas del Castillo se había mandado hacer un traje interior de hojalata por lo que pudiera ocurrir” (2). Notwithstanding precautions by Cánovas, he was assassinated at a summer vacation resort in Santa Agueda, Guipúzcoa, by the Italian anarchist Michele Angiollo on 8 August 1897. The following week, liberal Taboada in his “De todo un

poco” column of 14 August 1897, makes no mention of Cánovas’s assassination. Clarín, however, in his weekly “Palique” does, but he is more interested in the upcoming struggle for the now vacant leadership post in the Conservative party than in condemning the assassin. Noticeably, he expresses compassion for the anarchist:

[L]eo en un periódico que un italiano ha matado a Cánovas.
Excuso decir que lamento el suceso.
Porque es un crimen
Porque es la muerte de un hermano; porque Cánovas era nuestro
hermano, según la buena religión.
Y porque *será* la muerte de otro hermano: el *asesino* de Cánovas (267).⁷

Two months later, 9 October 1897, anarchism is referenced with a light and humorous touch in a cartoon by Ramón Cilla entitled “El sósten del orden.” The main point of the cartoon is an implied criticism of the police as one thief says to another:

Lo que hace falta es que este Gobierno persiga a los anarquistas con el mismo rigor que el otro. Porque, la verdad, a mí me gusta mucho entrar de noche en las casas y atar codo con codo... ¡Y sentiría que me quitaran esas onímodas facultades. (335)

Although *Madrid Cómico* finished the century without further reference to anarchism, its campaign of many years had set a precedent for continuation. For example, in the 16 April 1904 issue of new short-lived, liberal weekly *Alma Española*—only four days after a Spanish anarchist attempted to kill Prime Minister Antonio Maura—there is a large cartoon sketch (by Xarikato) entitled “Música Del Viaje” and an accompanying poem (by Luis de Tapia). On the left side of the sketch, one sees the elegantly dressed Maura, with a suitcase marked “Barcelona.” The other half of the sketch presents a disheveled *anarquista*, who is carrying two types of bombs and a can of fuel. This individual has been paid, according to the poem, “tres duros en plata” to place a bomb which will blow up Maura’s Barcelona-bound train.” Such is *Alma Española’s* treatment of the attempt on Maura’s life, and its poem is as follows:

Música del viaje

Ved a Maura, el arrogante
con alforjas muy bien puesta
le retrata el dibujante
Triunfó como viajante
aunque le pudiera hacer crac
no va vestido de frac,
y en la maleta de cutero
para pagarle a la *cloque*

Anarquista con careta

que por tres duros en plata
puso un petardo de lata
Junto a la Barceloneta.
 Agente de *la secreta*
hizo con farsa sencilla,
y a la coronada villa
volverá libre de apuros,
a gastarse los tres duros,
de la bomba en Bombilla.⁸

LUIS DE TAPIA (10)

The train alluded to in the poem was a special one in which Maura accompanied Alfonso XIII to Barcelona. An attempt on the life of Maura occurred there when he was alone in a street carriage. Although Joaquín Miguel Artel tried to assassinate Maura in Barcelona on 14 April 1904 with a knife rather than with a bomb, he did shout “¡Viva la anarquía!” (Pérez Delgado 520). Because José Orega Munilla, the *Director* of *El Imperial*, also traveled on the special train, he was able to report the assassination attempt and describe tensions in the Catalan capital. Izquierdo Labella contrasts his coverage with that of other newspapers (128-30).

1891 saw the founding of a rival newspaper, *Blanco y Negro*, which in time would surpass *Madrid Cómico* in popularity. It adopted early on *Madrid Cómico*'s approach to terrorist bombings as we see in the following description by Lou Charnon-Deutsch:

Cartoons satirizing important political events abound, typical among them the 1892 cartoon-summary of events that depicted attacking Arabs, communist bombs, political upheavals, and a scandal over the rise in the price of bread, serious problems affecting the nation, but treated lightheartedly in most instances. (88-90)

Although *Madrid Cómico* went into decline at the end of the Nineteenth Century, it had been, starting with the Casino owners bombing campaign in 1881, steadfastly committed in its striving to alleviate the paralyzing fear occasioned by terrorist bombings and assassinations. It was most attentive to the period immediately preceding the annual May Day workers' demonstrations, devoting three numbers to that circumstance in 1892. After mistakenly believing that the peak of the anarchist attacks had passed in 1893, it responded that year to the horrible bombing of the *Teatro Liceo* and the attempt on the life of General Martínez Campo, as well as subsequently to the assassination of Cánovas del Castillo. Although there are no letters to the editor, which might help us judge the effectiveness of the immensely popular newspaper's efforts, there is no doubt as to the uniqueness of its engagement. Because it had no foreign correspondents nor utilized foreign news services, it spared its readers the news of rampant anarchism in other European countries. Its only front-page coverage was a humorous cartoon depicting the pre-May-arrest of an anarchist poet.⁹ In its lampooning of the excesses and sensationalism of the mainline press, which it felt actually helped the anarchists, *Madrid Cómico* had an

array of methods, including humor, satire, cartoons, word play, festive poems, and mini-fictions—as well as the talent of Luis Taboada, who was esteemed throughout Spain.

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Notes

- ¹ Madrid found it necessary to change from “una villa y corte castiza” into a modern metropolis with great speed because it had lagged behind many other capitals in adapting to the rhythms of world economies (Versteeg 13).
- ² It is a pleasure to thank Margot Versteeg (Univ. of Kansas) for her expertise in helping me locate all the references to *Madrid Cómico* used in this study.
- ³ The histories of Spain, as well as the specialized works on anarchism in Spain, which I have been able to consult, do not provide a precise, preferable definition of anarchism. The twenty-first century *Encyclopedia of Politics: The Left and the Right* illustrates how a definition of anarchism has added new dimensions since the 1890s:

The modern political theory that holds that all forms of government or authority are oppressive and therefore should be abolished in order to attain equality and justice based on free contractual agreement between individuals and groups. The etymology of the word *anarchism* is derived from the Greek *anarchos* meaning no rule by anybody or having no government.

Central to anarchist thought is the belief that all forms of authority and oppression—state, church, patriarchy/sexism, racism, national chauvinism and conventional morality are detrimental to the fulfillment of human potential. Anarchists contend that society is natural and people are good but power is corrupting. Therefore, the highest stage of humanity is the freedom of individuals to express themselves and live in harmony on the basis of creativity, cooperation, and mutual respect. (21).

- ⁴ Italy was much more successful in dealing with the anarchists. Instead of harsh repression, which generated violent responses and created martyrs, the Italians, influenced by the studies of Lombroso, Ferri, and other criminal anthropologists, refused to consider the anarchists as social reformers or political activists. Rather they had individual terrorists adjudged to be mentally ill, and thus justifiably removed from society. For details, see Bach Jensen (31-44).
- ⁵ See Addendum 1.
- ⁶ For more details concerning Taboada, see Versteeg (141-93).
- ⁷ Alas had long been sympathetic to the plight of the Spanish workers. He had been a reporter at the repressive *Mano Negra* trial of alleged anarchists in Jerez in 1884. Although Alas disliked the anarchists’ leaders and the movement’s ideology, he believed, as did other activist professors at the University of Oviedo, that the workers could gain much more through education than through acts of violence (Lissorgues 61-67). Alas’s short story “Un jornalero” illustrates the need for worker education and possible tragic consequences when this is not accomplished.
- ⁸ In his novel *Aurora roja*, Pío Baroja confirms the existence of the colorfully named eating-and-drinking establishment *La Bombilla* as a place frequented by anarchists (537). Also the frontispiece of the 30 July 1898 issue of *Madrid Cómico* features a painting by F.S. Corvisa entitled “En la Bombilla, which shows people enjoying themselves there.

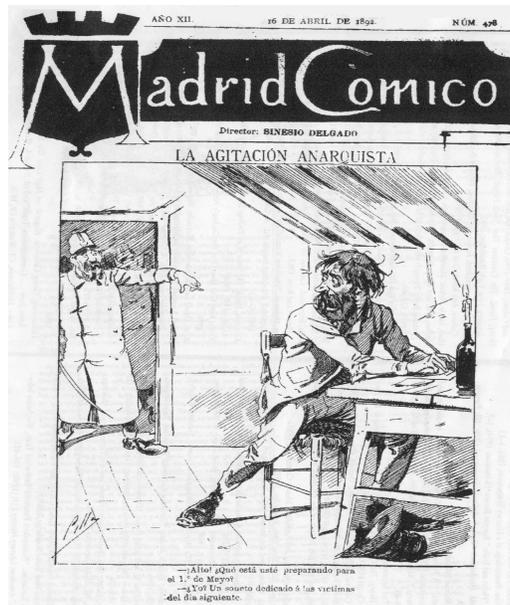
Baroja also has a character in *Aurora roja* who recalls being an eyewitness to the horrible carnage immediately after the *Liceo* bombing in Barcelona (576-77).

⁹ For a contrasting mainline front page, see the Izquierdo Labella's photograph of *El Heraldo de Madrid's* 23 November 1912 coverage of "Un anarquista asesina a Candelegas" (frontispiece).

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Addendum



(See page 21 above for a discussion of the cartoon)



(See page 25 above for a discussion of the cartoon)