

CAPETILLO, LUISA (1876–1922)

“This planet belongs to all of us and is not the privilege of only a few, Why are there so many injustices?” Luisa Capetillo.

Luisa Capetillo was born in the town of Arecibo, Puerto Rico. Her mother made sure that Luisa received a solid education at home and encouraged her interest in literature. Capetillo became active in the Federación Libre de Trabajadores (FLT, Free Federation of Workers) from its inception in 1899. Capetillo worked in cigar factories and was also a reader in these factories, paid by cigar workers themselves to read novels, philosophical and political essays, and other writings aloud as they prepared the cigars. In 1904 Capetillo started writing short pieces for labor newspapers and magazines. Her first book, *Ensayos libertinos*, was published in 1907. In 1909 she founded a short-lived feminist working-class magazine called *La mujer*. In 1911 Capetillo published her most important and influential book, *Mi opinión sobre las libertades, derechos, y deberes de la mujer*. In 1912 she moved to New York and began her work as an international labor intellectual and organizer. In 1915 she moved to Havana, Cuba where she was arrested and subsequently acquitted for wearing trousers, considered at the time exclusively men’s clothing, in public. In 1916 Capetillo was deported for her work on behalf of anarchist organizations in Cuba. Back in Puerto Rico, Capetillo published her fourth and final book, *Influencias de las ideas modernas*. Between 1916 and 1919 Capetillo actively organized and participated in strikes and collaborated with working-class newspapers and magazines. Capetillo was a well known figure both in Puerto Rico’s labor movement and in literary and feminist circles.