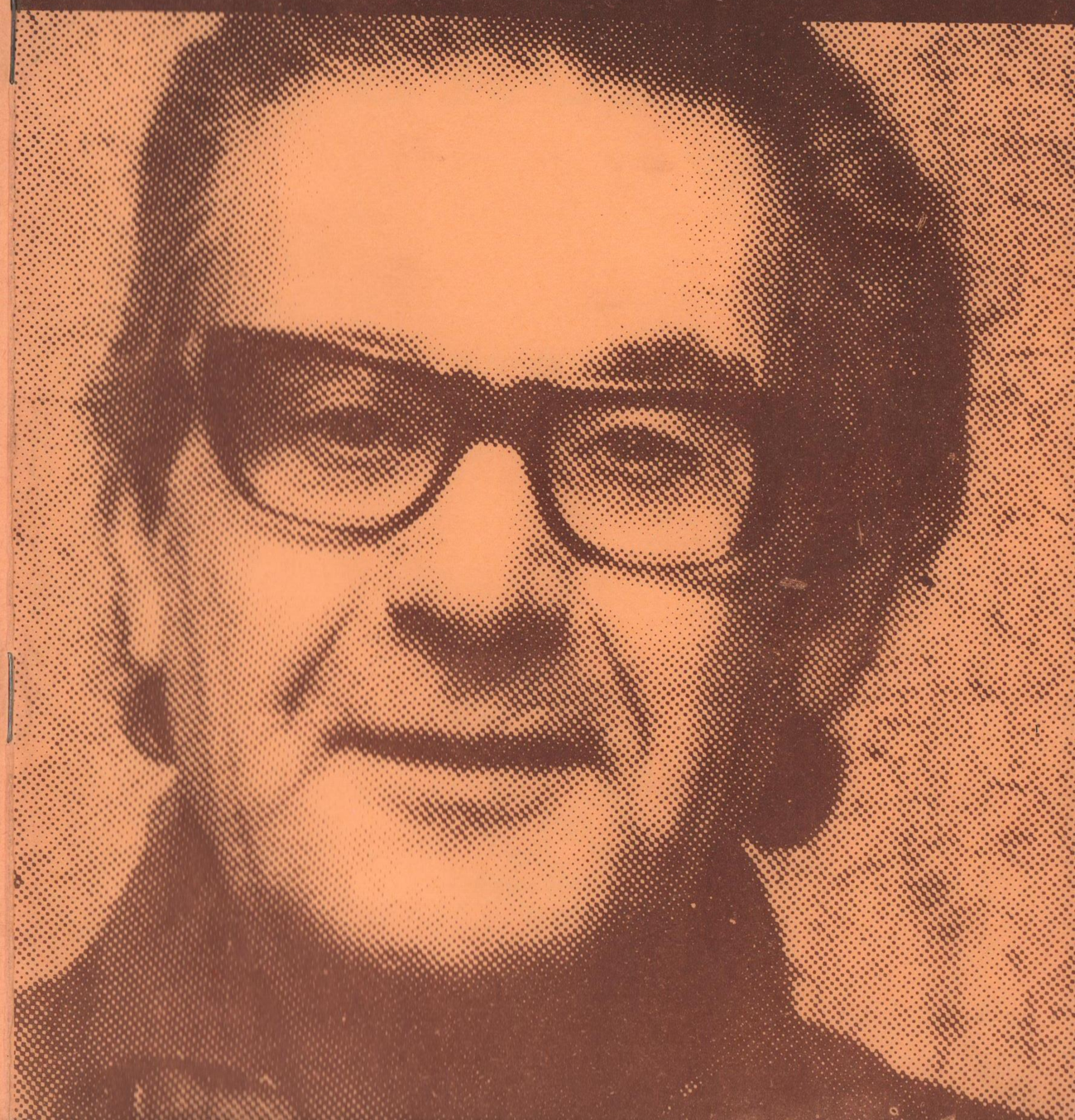
MIGUEL GARCIA'S STORY



MIGUEL GARCIA'S STORY

EDITED BY

ALBERT MELTZER

MIGUEL GARCIA'S STORY
edited by Albert Meltzer
Miguel Garcia Memorial Committee
in association with
Cienfuegos Press, 1982.

First published 1982 by
Miguel Garcia Memorial Committee
& Cienfuegos Press
Over the Water, Sanday
Orkney, KW17 2BL, U.K.

Design & Lay-out, Phil Ruff.
Typeset by Windhorse (01-981 1407)
Printed by Little @ Ltd,
C1 Metropolitan Wharf,
64 Wapping Wall,
London E1 (01-488 0602)

ISBN 0-904564-54-5

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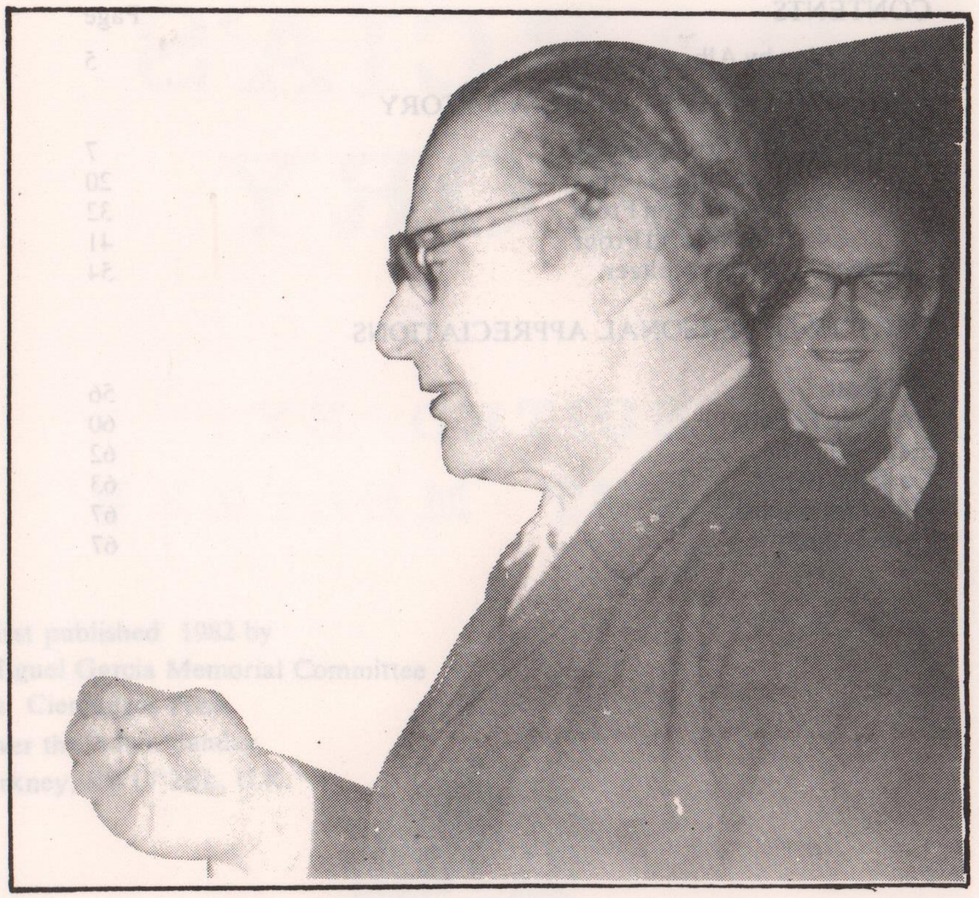


Miguel Garcia and Albert Meltzer, 3 April 1976.

INTRODUCTION

Back in the days when Spanish labour was battling against the ruling class in almost daily strikes (while the rest of Europe the workers were fighting each other in a vain sacrifice to imperialism), in the "anarchist disricts" of Barcelona even the newsboys (some eight to eleven years old) came out to demand more pay for peddling the daily papers, (pro-German if monarchist, pro-Allied if republican). The proprietors sank their differences on a fight against these fearsome enemies and called out the Guardia Civil. In a cavalry attack upon the newsboys, one armed Guardia Civil feel victim to the stoning — he fell heavily, bleeding from the eye.

The boy — from a home in which father, mother, sisters, brothers were supporters of the CNT (and whose father was one of those who acted as bodyguard to Salvador Segui — the fighting secretary of the unions known affectionately as "Sugarbaby" because his looks belied his toughness) — was assured of support. But Barcelona was not safe for him and he escaped to France.

Thus Miguel Garcia at an early age began his involvement in the international anarchist movement. He came to speak French as well as Spanish. He fought hard in both countries for the libertarian ideal. When the Civil War broke out he drove trucks across the border bringing arms to Spain until stopped. In the Plaza Real, he and his friends and acquaintances gathered together when the fighting broke out. Most workers had rushed to CNT union halls and from there, generally with no more than work and domestic tools — axes, hatchets, knives — surrounded the military government building.

At 28, veteran of many struggles, Miguel Garcia, gathered up his friends in the plaza Real and they rushed in the *other* direction, up the Ramblas into wealthy Barcelona, storming the gunshops. They collected a formidable round of weapons from a prepared list of sports shops and *then* went to Columbus Square. (A tense moment when they passed an armed Civil Guard squad: whether to go forward or backwards was inviting to be shot in the back. Defiantly they passed, shouting the slogans of the CNT. The Guard saluted. It was loyal to the Popular Front — not to the point of marching to the square to fight the Fascist rebels, but to the point of passively obeying whatever government was.)

He went to the Saragossa front first, then to the Madrid front where he spent the rest of the Civil war.

When the war ended he fought on against Franco, and was finally sent to a concentration camp where he spend 2½ years for "re-education". But, as he said, he was a "bad pupil". There he met Facerias and the Sabater brothers, and determined, with them, to set up the organisation again once released. They did so. On release they joined the Spanish Resistance (1939-49) of which so little is known.

There were many aspects to it: the smuggling of arms and people over the frontier and down the mountains from or to Barcelona. The re-organisation of the unions of the CNT. The sabotage against Franco and especially against the Axis war effort. One by one the heros of the Resistance — bandits after 1939 according to Franco, but only after 1945 according to the Allies! — fell to ambushes. Only a few survived. Massana, who died recently, "last of the mountain guerrillas". Miguel Garcia, urban fighter in France, organiser of illegal printing presses in Barcelona, part of the chain for escapees in Catalonia.

Like many others Miguel was caught and

went to prison for 20 years (after a death sentence had been commuted owing to international pressure). He writes of this graphically in his book "Franco's Prisoner". His comrade-in-arms died, but he managed to survive. And after coming out he entered into a new struggle. Speaking fluent Italian, impeccable French and not quite so good English, which he learned in prison to be able to read the Anglo-American press, he decided to go abroad and denounce the Franco regime; organise fresh resistance and work towards the future. Without a penny, with nothing to back him but sheer guts, he came and joined us in the Black Cross in London.

He spoke all over England and Scotland, but also in West Germany — East Berlin too by a ruse — France, Belgium, Italy... I remember so well driving him from town to town and the whoops of our delighted singing after we had passed a forbidden frontier (the Franco police never queried an English car!)

When Miguel's book came out it was widely reviewed, usually compared with another book "In Hiding" about a Socialist major, also an opponent of Franco, who regarded the anarchists as "fools". In the preface to the German version of "Franco's Prisoner" Miguel commented typically that the mayor had spent thirty years hiding in a cupboard just as — for that matter — had German socialism. His book was for the "fools", in Germany and elsewhere, who resisted. His creed was: In front of tyranny, no compromise, no quarter.

He finally was sentenced to death, commuted to 30 years imprisonment (of which he served 20 years).

What gives Miguel his unique place in libertarian history is not so much the fact of his years of struggling for the Anarchist principle in Spain, but the fact that after coming out of 20 years solid jail he again came to the front from another new direction, this time on the international field.

He was an inspiration for all the revolutionary Anarchist groups, the Angry Brigade, the First of May Solidarity groupings, the MIL... as well as others in Spain, Germany and England. He appreciated that the situation in Spain, after years of Francoist repression in which all publicity was given to the Communist Party and the libertarian movement was both suppressed and ignored, meant world attention had to be brought to the Spanish situation and in particular to practical co-operation that would lead to an international different from the various paper internationals.

What the international revolutionary movement owes him no one will ever fully know. His contacts in Spain made it possible for us to help a large number of libertarian prisoners; but his contacts were not only in Spain. All over Europe there are people he helped one way or another (a real internationalist, he was just as much concerned in helping people to squat in London as re-building the union movement in Catalonia). At the time of his death he was trying to see if he could visit the States on a lecture tour "and after that, I'll come to Africa with you."

Miguel died of TB after a hard life but one well worth while. He has been a great inspiration to us all.

Albert Meltzer

PART ONE:
MIGUEL GARCIA'S STORY

CHAPTER 1
MY FIRST MEMORIES

The calle Pelayo in Barcelona early in the century, when Miguel sold papers.

My first memories are of boys running through the streets selling newspapers, cheeky urchins of nine years' old racing along, as keen to distribute the latest news as if they were gentlemen of the press. That was how we thought of ourselves. I loved the atmosphere of the newspaper office, the sense of urgency as the bales were rushed out, dashing through the streets, and the manner in which the news was accepted.

For those were dramatic days. The war in Europe was coming to an end, Catalonia was rising against the Spanish monarchy, the city of Barcelona was in an uproar as labour battled against capital. Everyone snatched the papers avidly... "Russia collapses, Tsar

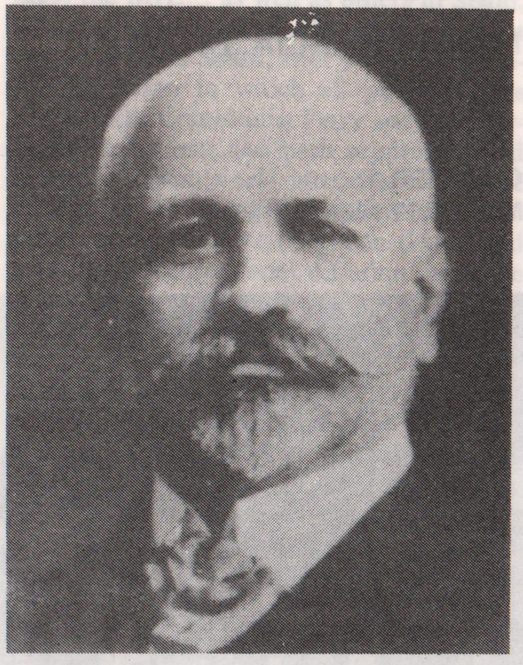
ovethrown... Germany: Dramatic retreat"... "Military law in Spain".

I enjoyed it so much I didn't really do it for the money. But I liked to feel I was a wage earner, even at nine. My father did not like me to do it. I respected him so much I hated to deceive him. He said the boys were being exploited. But I knew my family needed every penny it could get.

I used to invent little pretexts for having money. "I found this money on the beach... a rich foreigner asked me the way to the Plaza de Colon and look what he gave me..." I gave the money to my mother and said I already had enough. She kissed me and I felt proud, though a little ashamed of my deceit. My mother was a devout woman, a believer, but so much in love with my father that she forgave him his heresies. And in her own way she was a good Anarchist too. She didn't take libertarian views just on his say-so. Though she still respected the priests' views on the other world, in this one she did not accept that there should be injustice or oppression.

At that time there were huge sums being made in the war factories of Spain. It was neutral, and traded with both sides, and the profiteers made fortunes. None of this was passed on. The unions began to press for a bigger share of the cash that was flowing so freely into Spain. It was not that the workers were particularly greedy for money. In Barcelona the majority of the workers were "confederals" — organised in the National Confederation of Labour (C.N.T.) which looked forward to a takeover of the factories but which, while it fought for wage increases when these were possible, was just as concerned with the dignity of labour and the rights of the individual. Their members would not let themselves be too closely supervised at work. "You are the thief, not us," they would tell their employer calmly, as they rolled their cigarettes. "Take away your watchmen and let them look after your wife's virtue instead!"

My mother never quite understood her husband's activities in the C.N.T., into which struggle he threw himself. She loved



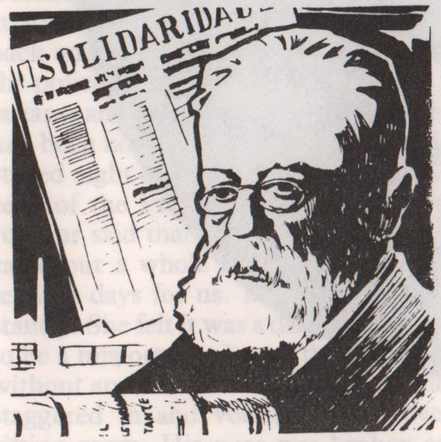
Francisco Ferrer, libertarian educationalist, whose name Miguel later adopted in the anti-Franco Resistance.

him deeply and was sad that he was not a believer. But they could not have been more closely in love. Many Spanish families beat their children across the face — it is a habit, and they do not mean any malice. But my parents never did. My father spoke to us quietly, reasonably. He felt he could educate us himself. He spoke of Francisco Ferrer, the idealist of the libertarian movement. Ferrer's Free School was still vividly in the minds of the Barcelona workers. He had introduced secular education and had been shot for his involvement in the revolutionary movement — chiefly because of the opposition to him by the Church.

My father and his friends never spoke of Marx. His influence had not reached into the Spanish labour movement. The orthodox

Socialist party was small. The workers had followed the events in Russia with interest, but the majority felt that it would lead merely to a new dictatorship, and that the revolution had been betrayed in its earliest stages once Lenin had returned to form the government. Trade unionism on parliamentary lines was negligible — the General Union of Workers (UGT) though recognised by the world's trade unions, had little influence compared with the Confederation that had, since its inception in 1910, been the guiding spirit in the life of many thousands of men like my father.

He spoke of Anselmo Lorenzo, the printer whose influence had helped form the CNT. Through Lorenzo the views of Proudhon and the later Anarchists had spread throughout Spain, to become a force that even the Governments that made the movement clandestine had to take into account. The printworkers and bookbinders, the most literate of the working-class, had enthusiastically spread the idea of the libertarian union, in which orders came not from the General Secretary downwards, but from the factory councils upwards. They read Kropotkin and Malatesta, and dismissed Marx as a pedant. This had been the attitude of the Spanish labour movement for a long time, since the first Republic, when the



Anselmo Lorenzo, pioneer of Anarcho-Syndicalism in Spain.

International had first penetrated Spain. Ricardo Fanelli had turned up in Madrid as the emissary of Michael Bakunin, then forming the anarchist faction within the International, barely speaking a word of Spanish, and within months his ideas had penetrated throughout the Peninsula. Marx had written gloomily to Engels that "we shall have to write Spain off for the time being".

At that time in Barcelona the most popular man in the movement, the current general secretary of the CNT, was Salvador Segui — known affectionately as the "Sugar-baby" (*Noy d'el Sucre* in Catalan) because of the contrast between his gentle winning ways and babyface and the absolute ruthlessness of his way of struggle. The employers had determined to crush the C.N.T. once the Catalanist rising was over, and they tried to force the workmen into the "Free Syndicate". They employed gunmen. The anarchists within the C.N.T. retorted in like manner. They saw their workmates shot down by the police and troops in battles which began as peaceful demonstrations to demand higher wages: they responded with bombs and bullets. The armed pistoleros did not dare penetrate into the union headquarters. They cowardly ambushed the union militants and invaded the homes of the strikers.

Our people responded in the bourgeois quarters with explosions in the homes of police officers such as Bravo Portillo, who used such tactics. Martinez Huido, the Civil Governor, who introduced the law by which prisoners could be shot out of hand "trying to escape", and the ruthless chief of police, Arlegui were sacked after trying to assassinate union leader Angel Pestana.

After the shooting of the workers locked out by the English firm "El Canadiense", among whom were many of our friends, by police who raided a peaceful meeting, my father wept. There was a new determination about him. I was too young to understand what had happened.

Sometimes my mother would confide in me. "Pray God your father comes home

Salvador Segui ("Noi de Sucre" — "Sugarbaby"), the fighting secretary of the CNT.

safely. Pray, Miguel, pray!"

"What is the matter, mother?" I would ask alarmed, but she would not answer. She shook her head sadly.

"He has many strange ideas. But he is a good man. He feels one man should not exploit another as if he were a mule... What is it to us? We are so small a family..."

Now I think I understand that my father was one of the many libertarians who took up arms at that time, convinced they could only defend their union by shooting back at the pistoleros hired by the big companies. He did not speak about it, but my mother knew. Once he came in breathless, his coat torn, and dabbing at blood coming from his arm. She seized him in alarm. He laughed off her fears and kissed her. "It's nothing," he said, though we could hear the sirens wailing in the streets and the sound of gunfire.

While my mother dressed his arm, he comforted her. He turned to us. "Don't worry children — the chief of police is having a holiday. But mind you don't go near the fireworks. You can watch them from the window."

Sometimes he would play with us and mention his ideas. "Nobody should be a policeman or a soldier. The laws are there to protect robbers."

One day he was arrested. A group of workers leaving the factory had been attacked by the pistoleros. They had shot back and a gunfight had taken place. Later the police made a general round-up of libertarians, and among them was my father, who had been nowhere near the incident. He had stayed eight days in the notorious basement cells of the Prefecture of Police, of which rumour said that no one who went in there came out a whole man again. Those were terrible days for us. My mother wept constantly. She felt it was a disgrace and knew it to be a misfortune. Later, they sent him out without any charge. When he came home he staggered in and vomited blood over the sitting room. His nose was broken and he had lost two teeth. Although a strong man, he was never able to work again. In the following year, the post-war epidemic of 1920 (known as the 'Spanish flu' but emanating from the battlefields of Europe) swept the country. My father, weakened and ill after those eight days of torture, died.

Now, at the age of 11, I was the man of the house. My mother and four sisters were bewailing our father's death and I was already wondering how to look after them. We followed him to his grave, and hundreds of his comrades joined in the procession. They followed in respect to the cemetery where he was buried, though many of them, because of their beliefs, would not take part in the religious ceremony which was the only legal one then permitted and which in any case was of great comfort to my mother.

I left school and found a job in a glass-making factory, which paid me five pesetas a week (about four shillings). My mother became a concierge in an apartment house, where she was paid about thirty shillings a month to sit in the office and check everyone in and out of the building. But she had a flat to house us and she was grateful for the money.

But the family was only barely surviving on the money. One of my sisters was ill and needed extra delicacies. I think she too had contracted the tuberculosis that had been present in my father. I decided to go back to selling papers again. I did not tell my mother, as I knew she would object, so I told her I had got a rise at the factory, and that I had got some tips from the tenants at the apartments.

It was only nine pesetas a week extra I made that way, but it made all the difference to our living. I decided that work at the laboratory was no way in which to get on. Grown men were earning 48 pesetas a week for skilled work. I could by diligence get nine or ten pesetas a day selling papers. So without telling my mother, I packed up my job and became a full time newsboy at the age of eleven. I was soon earning nearly sixty pesetas a week, and could not find sufficient pretexts to give the money to my mother.

No apprentice could earn that, no small

boy could pick up so many tips. The people of Barcelona were short of everything but they could not do without their evening paper. But my father's idealism had rubbed off on me. I did not spend a penny on myself. I gave my sisters money secretly, saying they were tips I had got, but they were not to say that they had received them.

My mother got worried as to why the tenants were apparently giving tips to her daughters, and questioned one of my sisters, who finally confessed she had got the money from me. She followed me one morning and saw me collect my papers and make off to the tram stop. I saw her, and felt terrible all day. I came in that night to face her shamefacedly. She did not reproach me for selling papers, but for lying to her. I felt bad about it, but persuaded her to let me keep on selling.

"Father would have liked it," I said naively. "He always said boys should not be used as cheap labour. Look, I am getting more than a grown man."

She did not know quite what to do. Then

came the great strike of newsboys, who came out all over Barcelona in a demand for more pay, which the employers could well afford with the booming interest in war news. But they resisted our demands to the extent that they brought out armed Guardia Civil on horseback to shoot down the children besieging their offices. There was a clash between these military heroes and the boys who began throwing stones. One stone caught a Guardia Civil officer in the eye, he fell from his horse bleeding heavily — which was reckoned a terrible thing, far more than the two boys who lay dead on the pavement.

I was the lad with the stone, and my mother sent me off to Perpignan that night. We had relatives there and I began working as a stable boy, and formed a great affection for French culture and way of life — though later, after bitter experience in France, I fear I lost it.

After a time over the border, I came back. A well-to-do friend of my mother's, said she would help my by paying for me to go to the technical college to learn the printing trade. I was excited at the prospect. I had a great aptitude to the printing trade and soon became a skilled compositor. After a year or so in the college I felt I knew everything there was to know. I was particularly fast composing Latin or medical books. But I was not happy at being unable to contribute to the support of my family and at having given up my freedom for three years, the length of the course. I wanted to show I was a man, and able to earn my living and keep my family. At the age of 13 I was engaged as a typesetter, having completed a year's college, at a little printshop, during my summer vacation. During that summer I earned nine pesetas a day.

The printer questioned me about my family. When he heard about my father and his activities, he allowed me to work at the back of the shop. There he produced a clandestine paper for the CNT. Although not a member of the organisation, he sympathised with it for its federalist aims. He was a strong Catalanist and spoke with feeling of Pi y

Margall, the Catalan philosopher whose Federalistic ideas were so well caught by the workers and who — although President during the few months of the First Republic — was often thought of as the main influence in the development of the anarcho-syndicalist movement in Spain.

I enjoyed being taken into the printer's confidence, I appreciated earning my own living, I liked being free, and it was not possible or me to go back to college after that. Besides, I felt I was a man... I had my first romance. She was a beautiful little girl named Lina, about the same age as myself. She lived near to us, and we often went for walks. I loved her dearly. She took me to her home. Her mother welcomed me. They lived in a nice apartment, and her mother was a kind woman. But I could never understand how she earned her living. She too was a widow. But my mother had to work hard. Lina's mother was always dressed beautifully, she lived well, and yet she never worked. Only one day I learned with a shock, when I was walking with Lina and some boys called after her spitefully, that her mother was a prostitute. She was careful not to take men to her home. She met them in bars and took them to discreet hotels.

But all this had nothing to do with Lina, I felt. I was delighted to be with her. One day, in her house, she told me her mother would not be back that night. We went to bed together. It was a shock to me to find she was not a virgin. It was an even greater shock when she confessed later, sobbing, that her mother had introduced her to some of the clients... I was violently upset. I dashed out of the house. Instead of returning home, I decided to take a long holiday. I took a train to the border, and walked across it dodging the frontier guards on either side. It was not too carefully guarded then, in 1921. There was nothing much to cross the border for... It was my first brush with authority, and it was successful. I went back to Perpignan, and looking big and strong and much older than my thirteen years, I got a job immediately as a fully fledged farm hand. Farmers were still in the flush of prosperity that had come with the war, and there was good money to be earned.

I wrote home with my first wages and said that I was sorry to have run away, but I had to be independent and I could not continue with college. My eldest sister came and implored me to come home. My conduct was making my mother ill, she said. If I came back I would be allowed to leave college and work at the printshop. All she insisted was that I should not sell newspapers.

I agreed to everything and came back. I kept the letter of my promise not to sell newspapers, but collected second hand books, and on holidays and week-ends I would put them in a barrow and sell them at the street market in the centre of Barcelona. Now I was bringing in 70 pesetas a week, my sister was working as a telephonist for the railway company, and my mother still had her job. Never again did we face, while I was with my family, the threat of starvation. Indeed, for the times, we were comfortably off. With the threat of hunger removed, I began to read avidly. I turned to the writers whom my father had cherished. I too became a libertarian though I never joined the organisation. I did not want to tie myself down.

I had seen so much to vindicate our belief that the State must be abolished. I had seen strikers beaten by clubs wielded by policemen, as they struggled to get a pittance for their families. I had seen gunmen shoot down men whom I knew to have no other interest than improving the conditions of their fellows. I had seen the people getting together and helping one another, and this very activity being regarded as seditious. It was no use the papers saying that these men were gangsters, "criminals". They were our friends and neighbours, the working people of Barcelona. Their ideals of Stateless socialism were those of some of the world's great philosophers who in many countries were dismissed as impractical idealists but who only confirmed to us what we already knew from our experience.

I entered the libertarian movement at the

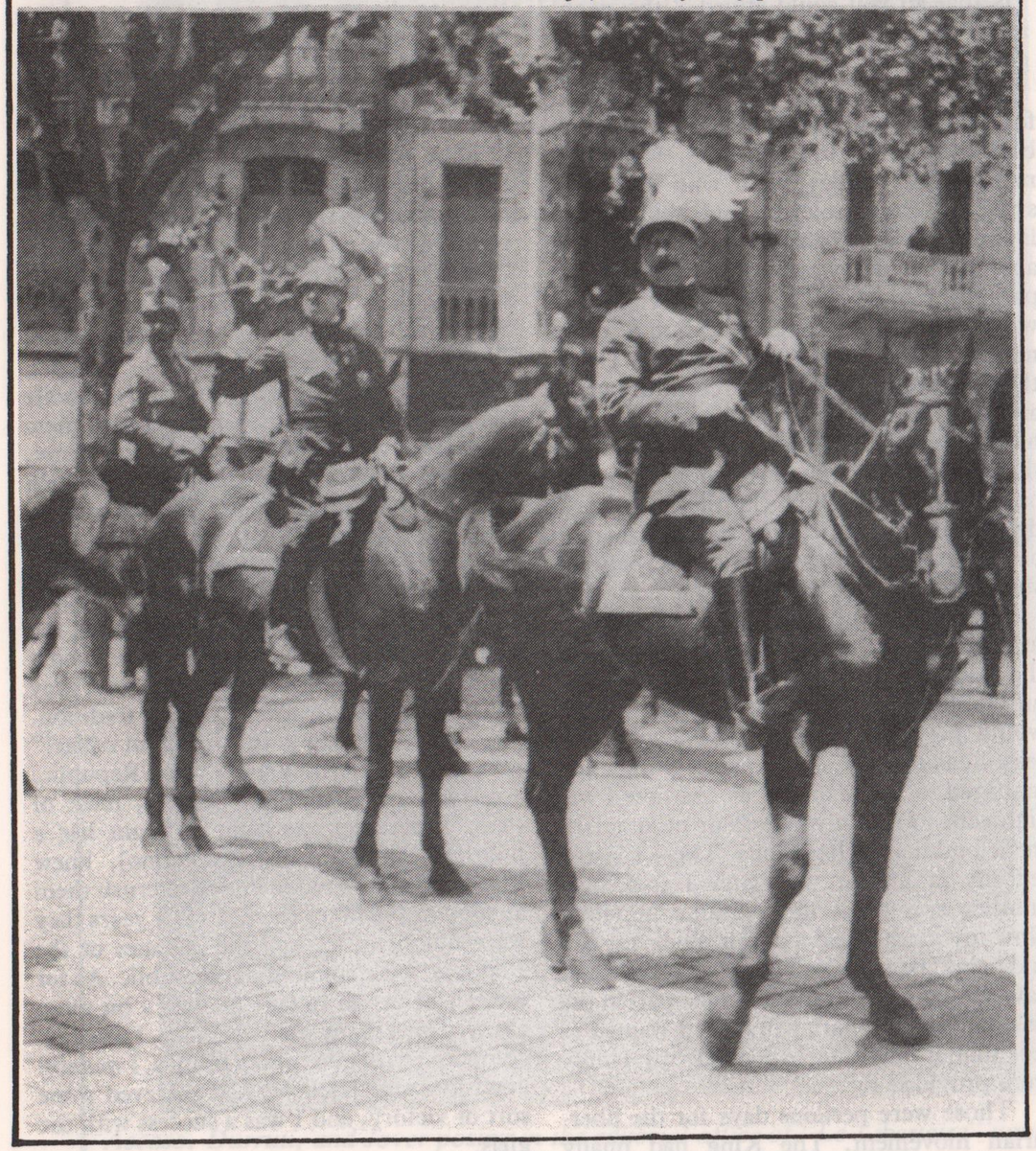
The place where the secretary of the CNT was murdered in 1923. Salvador Segui ("Noi de Sucre" — "Sugarbaby", as he was affectionately known) fell to the employers' fascist-type gunmen where the calle san Rafael meets the calle Cadena (where Miguel, in his last years, opened the cafe-bar "La Fragua" as a rendezvous for libertarians). Miguel's father was one of the workers who had volunteered to act as Segui's bodyguard. But he was alone when he was shot down.

age of fourteen and have supported its cause ever since. To help the organisation, I got a job in the Rancini Hotel, then one of the finest in the town, near the harbour where the shops left for Majorca. The staff were rapidly organised, and soon as a junior porter I was making so much I did not need to carry on at the printers. I was only 15, and I was earning 100 pesetas a week, unheard-of at that time. But I went back to the old man for whom I had been working, as he had nobody else whom he could trust to do the illicit typesetting. I worked for him for a few hours each week, and the knowledge stood me in good stead years later when I ran my own clandestine newspaper from the same printing press, long after the printer himself was dead.

Segui, whom we all admired so much, had been assassinated by the employers' gunmen. His successor, Pestana, had gone on a visit to Moscow. The allegiance of the Spanish anarcho-syndicalists was greatly desired by the Communist Trade Union International. Unfortunately for them, the Spanish delegates contacted the Russian Anarchists for first-hand information on what was really happening in Russia. They came back with reports of the dictatorship which were rare in left wing circles in those time. Their denunciations went even further than those of the British Labour Party and trade union movement which had also sent representatives, and who had also been critical of the dictatorial regime, but had felt it was impolitic to say too much about it.

Under the dictatorship of Primo de Rivera the CNT was illegal. But what difference did it make, at that time, to the CNT which was engaged, after the death of Segui, in a constant running battle with the employers? Largo Caballero, the socialist (later hailed as the "Spanish Lenin" after he made his peace with the Communist Party during the Civil War) took advantage of his post in the dictatorship to see that not only was the CNT banned but its rival trade union centre, the UGT — the orthodox Socialist union, but very much a minority movement — legalised and favoured by the dictator-

Don Miguel Primo de Rivera, Captain General of Catlonia, who called out the Guardia Civil against the newsboys, later became Dictator of Spain. Largo Caballero, the Socialist leader, and other "Marxists" participated in his government in order to get the UGT legalised and in the hope of getting an advantage over the CNT — which was, as always, the subject of persecution.



ship. Every employer was urged to dismiss CNT labour and take on UGT labour. But because of the high standard of craft and morality which it set, the employers simply could not dispense with CNT labour. In Catalonia customers would scoff if they found that members of the 'yellow' union (the Free Syndicate) or even, sometimes, the socialist union (UGT) were being employed. "Is that all you could afford?" they would ask. "Pay a little more and let's be sure of a good job!"

Again and again the employers were forced to yield in these matters, and they hit back by shooting union leaders. There were many more besides Segui who fell in the struggle. The pistoleros even shot a Liberal lawyer, Layret, because he defended the anarchists in many court cases. Layret was a paraplegic, confined to his wheelchair, and when the gunmen came up to him he could neither defend himself nor run away. That is the way they worked, always cowardly and in ambush. We had to be prepared to hit back hard. Detached foreign observers might think there was nothing to choose between our violence and theirs. But there was a vast deal of difference between the assassination of Layret and the running battle between strikers and police.

It was often necessary to be prepared to jump across the border. I myself worked in the Palace Hotel in Trouville (Normandy) one summer season, as a boilerman. Later I would go up to Paris for the banqueting season, as a waiter. I was a keen worker and managed to save enough, by the time I was eighteen, to rent a whole floor of an apartment building in Barcelona. There I installed my family. A year later I took over another apartment in the same building. Now my mother had a dozen rooms for bed and breakfast — a small hotel. She would not have to want. I continued to take part in the risks of revolutionary work but I wanted to feel that if anything happened, my family were provided for.

Those were perilous days for the libertarian movement. The King had finally broken his oath and suspended the Constitution. He had brought into power the dictatorship of Primo de Rivera. After Socialist Party leaders such as Largo Caballero collaborated in the Government, to obtain concessions for the UGT, they were never again trusted by the workers. It was not — as some foreign authors thought — pure sectarianism in the anarchist movement that led them to distrust those who had persecuted them so bitterly in the Primo de Rivera days. In his latter days as Popular Front leader, Caballero was the idol of world communism. But not of us.

The struggle against the dictatorship finally brought it down, and the King — now discredited and the object of scorn — fled the country. Everyone was delirious. At last! "Spain is a workers' and peasants' republic," said the Socialist leaders, as they took office. Socialists, Liberals, Radicals, took office. They were professional men — doctors, lawyers, professors. They drew up elaborate plans for reform but they never carried them out. They were always afraid of the Army, afraid of provoking the Right Wing which hated them. But they were never too weak to use force against the working people. The police still came out in baton charges against strikers. "Order, discipline," they insisted in their speeches, when condemning the demands of the ordinary people. But when it came to the aristocracy and the Army, they spoke feebly of the need to respect tradition.

"The same dog with a different collar!" people said when they spoke of the Republic. And yet the Republican leaders, most of them Freemasons (which in Spain has a political, anti-clerical connotation), knew that the Right Wing intended to crush them as soon as possible. In only a few years they were out of office and the enemies of the Republic were running the Republic. As for me, I had begun to take matters a bit more easily. I was in my early twenties, I was rich compared with most of my friends, I was still good-looking, I felt we had achieved some sort of victory, and I was a success with the girls.

Ascaso, Durruti, and Jover posing in the editorial office of "Le Libertaire" upon their release from Prison. Paris, 14 July, 1927.

I began to be less inclined for action. Then again, I was not like many of my comrades. They had a fiercely puritan attitude which may seem strange in view of their opposition to government. Many would not drink or smoke, and took a pride in their appearance; though they disdained the marriage ceremonies of church and state, their lives were even more moral than those who feared God and the laws. I myself felt the revolution could be fun, too, I enjoyed a glass of wine. I did not remain faithful to my loves. Yet I could not help admiring the steadfast way in which so many of our comrades stuck to their principles through the difficult years.

On one occasion during a lengthily prolonged strike, great sums of money were needed for the families. That week some daring young anarchists, among whom, it was said, were Buenaventura Durruti, Francisco Ascaso, and Garcia Oliver, raided a bank and stole the money. They handed it to the strike committee. Everyone spoke of them with admiration. The organisation was horrified, though.

The Press now began speaking about Fascism and Communism. Spain, which was later to be considered the testing ground between the two, hardly knew what it was talking about. Fascism? Surely this was nothing more nor less than the pistoleros of the employers? There were some idealist Falangists who preached the new gospel but few people knew of them. Communism? Well, there was the Libertarian Communism preached by the CNT — but what had this to do with the "Marxist Leninist Bolshevism" against which the papers ranted? We had denounced it from the very beginning, ourselves. Bolsheviks? Is that what the Right Wing Press called us now? We were used to being called criminals, but Bolsheviks?

A Communist Party had been formed. But it was very small, about 35,000. It did not, as yet, reach the size of its rival Marxist Party (the POUM), which was stronger in Catalonia. The tensions of the Republic led to a rising in 1934. It began in the Asturias, which actually was a stronghold of the UGT. Most of the miners of the Asturias were Socialists but they differed from the rest of their Party in Spain. They were for action, they were for taking over control, and they united with the CNT miners. The troops moved in to fight the Asturians, and there were risings all over Spain. One of our best, Martinez, was killed in the fighting. In the meantime Catalonia proclaimed her independence. But the Catalalists proved to be like the Republicans. They wanted the support of the syndicalist workers but they could not trust them enough to let them have arms. They felt that with arms in their hands the workers would be unconquerable. They preferred to call on the General of Catalonia, Batet. He was a Catalan too. But he would not join the rebellion. Catalonia could at that moment have become independent, as the Catalan party held the key positions from which they could have armed the Catalans. But they did not do so. The rising was crushed. The Catalan leader, Bencas, had to escape through the sewers. Batet was soon in control of the situation on behalf of the Government.

And what was I doing? During that fatal day I was playing dominoes in the café. We heard on the radio that Catalonia had been independent, and that she was no longer independent. It had passed me by, as it had thousands of other workers.

Nevertheless, there was severe repression. The jails were crammed with prisoners. Because the socialists promised to release the prisoners, they won handsomely in the elections. Had the CNT-FAI broken its usual electoral abstention, the victory would have been a landslide. Some prisoners were released. But little altered. Again the Socialist leaders temporised. The workers were getting impatient. But it was only they who could save the country from the Army.

And the Army was becoming arrogant. It now had the measure of the social-democrats. It took the oath of loyalty to the Republic with no intention of keeping it. The officers sneered at the Government.

And they spoke admiringly of Hitler and Mussolini who had "solved their social problems". It was this above all that re-animated hundreds of thousands of Spaniards. What? We were reading of the atrocities in Germany and Italy, did they intend to introduce them here too?

"It's them or us!" people were saying. We knew that there were those in Spain who would not shrink from concentration camps. They did not need Hitler to teach them. We knew, too, there was only one thing that could prevent it: force of arms.

The Guardia Civil parade their captured (peace-time) enemy — land workers from Pedralba who wanted an increase on their miserable pittances and were arrested by these pampered, well paid thugs.

CHAPTER 2
BARCELONA IS OURS!

The People Armed, Barcelona 1936.

BARCELONA IS OURS! That is what they were shouting at the end of that now famous day, the 19th of July 1936. Everywhere the black-and-red flag of the CNT was flying. The bands were playing on the Ramblas. The people were delirious with excitement. They had hit back at world fascism and sent it reeling.

It was the day before that the news, so long expected, had come. The Army had decided to take over the Republic. It was staging a coup d'état. The Falange was declaring that this was the hour when Spain would be transformed into a Fascist State. We had read with horror for three years of the unparalleled atrocities in Germany. The terror against political opponents, the pogrom that had been launched against the Jews, the transformation of the country into a War State. We knew that the generals of Spain would hesitate at none of this so far as we were concerned. They had been as surely taught that the people was 'scum' as the Nazis had taught that the Jews were 'inferior'. There was no mercy to be had from them. Led by the Falange, they would represent a greater force against us than we had ever known before.

I had arranged to meet some friends in the syndicalist movement that Saturday night. Most of them were in the transport union. Like many others in the town they had their own plans formulated hastily in the course of the day. I told them I would contact others in the catering union. Its hall was close to the Captain General's Office, along the harbour, just off the Ramblas. From the balcony one could touch the Captaincy. One could look out over the harbour and see the Naval School, just off the via Layetana, and, to the right, overlooking the water, was the Military Government, in front of the Atarazanas barracks.

Farther to the west and towards the newer part of the city was the Plaza de Cataluna, a huge open-air walk; towering above the old city was the Columbus Monument, a great tower with a cupola on the top from which the old city could be viewed.

Rumours were flying when I reached the union headquarters early Sunday morning. Many people were walking about the streets as though they sensed they had seen their last night of peace for many years — for some of them, for ever. The Army must make a move soon, we felt. And this time it could not be like in 1934, when events passed us by. The Right Wing Press made no secret of the fact that they wanted a Fascist state. They praised Mussolini and Hitler daily. The clerical fascism of Austria sent them in raptures. But what chance have we, said some. The Barcelona garrison manned the barracks which ringed the city. They could surround the town in no time at all and take over everything. "This time, they have got to arm the people," we said. "The republic can't get out of it this time. They must give us arms or die themselves."

But nobody believed they would give us arms. Their record of the Republican leaders was against it. They called on the Army to be loyal; they relied on the assault police and carabineros. The latter (customs officers in uniform) always remained loyal to them, while the assault police was on its own creation — built to fight the workers, now relying upon them for co-operation. But such State forces as remained loyal were no subtitute for an armed people, and this they wanted to resist.

Some CNT workers, however, decided they would not go down without a struggle. The strongest section for resistance was in the transport union. A group of us in the catering section decided to go along to the old city to try to organise a break into an armoury. That way some of us would get guns. When we went down the Rambla, however, we found no transport available. A riot had begun.

"Death to fascism," people were crying. "Hang the generals!" Stones were thrown, shop windows broken. A crowd gathered, shouting increased, the people became bolder. They broke down shop doors, pillaged what they could, seized what they could carry, broke into tills, fought among themselves for the best goods. The five of us, who had decided to go on the arms raid, stood there watching. No police arrived. The crowd became more noisy, a wine shop was broken into.

I jumped on a barrow and began making a speech. "This isn't the way to fight fascism. There is only one way — with guns. Leave alone the toys of the bourgeoisie and come and raid the armouries!"

There was a shout of acclaim. My friends and I led them to a famous shop called Beristany, where the rich used to buy their Remingtons and Winchesters, hunting guns, revolvers. The crowd hammered at the barred door... They kicked it in. Most of them made a grab at the money tills. My group forced its way in and began to arm ourselves. I took an expensive new Remington, and crammed my pockets with ammunition. My friends took Winchesters. The crowd began to calm down. In the light of the street lamps they saw us purposefully arming. They stopped their pillaging for money and began to fight for guns. Every gun went, every round of ammunition. The men waved their new weapons and cheered. They were an indisciplined rabble before. Suddenly they felt themselves a new power. They came to pillage, they went back to fight. In the next 24 hours, many of them were to die.

I went home to hide my gun and ammunition. I did not want to parade the streets with it over my shoulder until the hour was ripe. When my mother saw me come in, gun in hand, she walked over to me. But she did

not protest. I remembered how she had so often tried to persuade my father to give up his militancy. She smiled at me. "Take care, my son," she said. I kissed her, and told her not to be concerned. I went back to the catering union HQ.

I showed my card and went in. There wer many people there all eagerly discussing the events. The Army had risen throughout Spain. The Republic was appealing for loyalty. The two main unions, the CNT and the UGT, had called a general strike for wherever the rebels were in control. They demanded armed resistance to fascism.

All over Barcelona there had been incidents like the one in which I had participated. The members of the FAI had decided to arm themselves. They knew that nobody would ever give them arms. In the crowd in the hall guns were bristling. But many of them were old revolvers and only a few had got hold of rifles from the armouries of the town. We heard gunfire, machine gun fusillades, rifle shots and shouts in the distance. It was seven in the morning of the 19th. July, already hot. The city was stirring and shifting.

I had my pistol with me. I decided that I needed my rifle. I gathered together a few friends and we decided to go out and find what was going on. Nobody else was resisting but us. The UGT members remained in their halls impassive. The Socialists wrote manifestoes.I would run home and get my gun. I opened the door of the union building and looked across the calle Merced to the huge back door, solid wood reinforced by iron, of the Captaincy General. There were about 200 men in the Captain General's quarters. Some were staff officers, the rest armed troops. At the bridge which connects the Captaincy General with the Church of Merced I saw soldiers — only a few feet away from our building. I turned round to talk to the man behind me who was carrying one of the few carbines in the room.

"Put it down your trouser leg. The soldiers will shoot you from there if they see it." But he was proud of his gun and would not listen.

"Follow me — run," I shouted, dashing out of the building, under the bridge and round the corner, safe from their line of fire.

I heard a shout, "Drop that gun." Then there came a shot.

I ran back. The man with carbine was lying doubled up on the street, his gun a few feet away. He was moaning with pain as his leg bled. He had been shot by soldiers on the bridge. I looked up at the officer who was there. "He's wounded — can I take him to the clinic?"

"Yes," said the officer. "But surrender his carbine. Put it by the door." We put his carbine by the door under the bridge. It opened, and the gun was snatched in, the door closed. We passed with him swiftly under the bridge to a first aid post used by the dockworkers. He was the first man of my union to be blooded.

Now there were many on the streets, guns appearing everywhere. Women, too. I could not wait any longer. I told my friend to wait at the first aid post, and ran home, got my Remington and all my ammunition, and joined him again.

By this time the battle was on. The transport union was crowded. There, the transport workers had rallied, from all parts of the town. Durruti and Ascaso were there, trying to organise them into shock groups, as other workers joined them. Catering workers came, some in their whites from the kitchens, some from the restaurants in the narrow streets or from the cafes in the Ramblas, from the bakeries and abbattoirs, some with the meat cleavers and long kitchen knives. They intended to defend the building with their lives. It seemed a hopeless task. Each time one of our fighters tried to dash out and make a break, gun in hand, to take up a position where he could shoot up at the troops, he was shot down.

An armoured lorry, hastily improvised by the railway workers, charged down the Ramblas into the empty Plaza de Catalunya to challenge control of the streets. There were bodies all around, and the spent bullet

hummed and kertoinged their way round the streets.

There was no way into the Captaincy. One had to make a long run round the Ramblas and through side streets to get to the back door. But there were armed men there too covering the street.

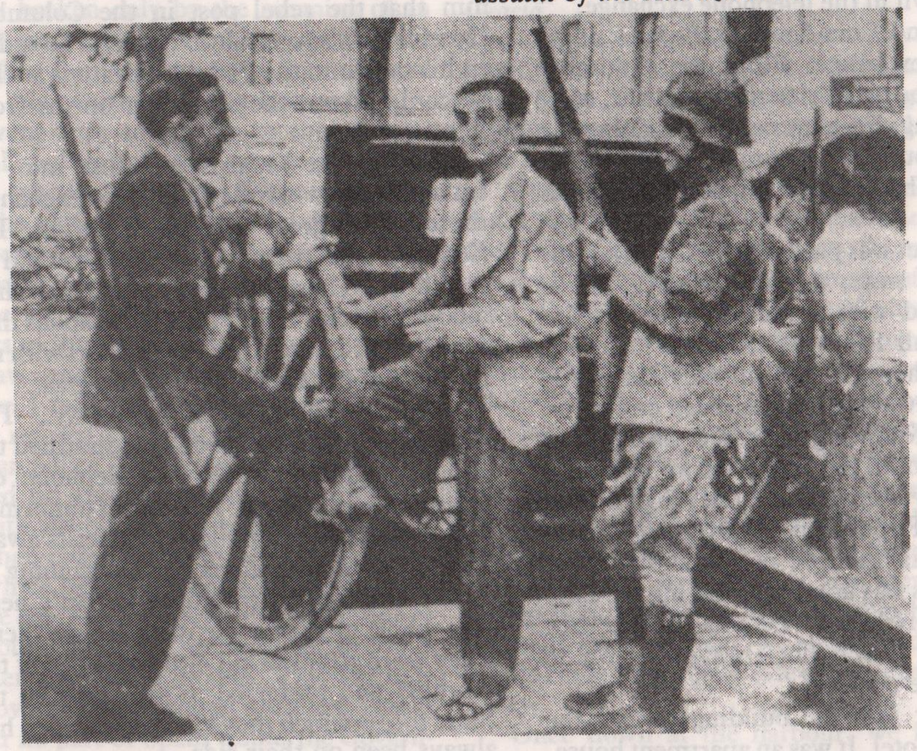
There was the sound of machine gun firing from nearby. It came from the cupola on the Columbus Monument. There was a Fascist up there with a weapon and ammunition and he was dominating the open spaces of the old part of town. He was a hundred feet up and well protected. People were crouching in doorways sniping at him. But any attempt at getting coser was thwarted. The snipers were shot down.

As we joined the snipers, we heard the news that Francisco Ascaso had been shot down in the fighting and killed. He had died when went to negotiate for the surrender of the Atarazana Barracks which had shown a white flag. He had been loved and respected throughout the city, and his death was taken as a personal blow. Tough fighters, who had been through the mill of battle in some form or other with this same enemy many times, wept when they heard the news. Every man was angry. As the news of his death spread, their rage began to mount. So many had gone the same way. This time, they said, the result would be different.

My friend, Angel, who was with me, tugged me by the arm. "The main fight seems to be in the Plaza de Cataluna. That's where we'll be most necessary. There are plenty now to defend the union building."

That is how it was, completely without direction. We had been taken unprepared. But we were all determined to act on our own responsibility. Angel and I headed down the Rambla, dodging from tree to tree when we were near the square of the Plaza, as bullets

Barcelona, 20 July 1936 — Francisco Ascaso (left) talking to his cousin Joaquin, one hour before he was killed during the assault of the Atarazana Barracks.



were flying in the great battle. Men were lying dead on the streets and under the trees, shot down by military snipers from the rooftops or from soldiers in the square. We luckily managed to reach the square without being hit. I lay behind a tree with my rifle trying to find out what was happening. Everything was confused, there were shouts and screams and machine gun fire.

I saw many men shot down. Fascists — civilian supporters of the Army — and a handful of soldiers were defending the telephone exchange, from which the operators had fled. There was heavy firing. On the other side of the square was the officers' club where a section of troops were stationed. They had a machine gun in the hallway of the club and were sweeping the square with fire. Men were trying to shelter behind dead mules in the square. There was nothing in the square, not one tree, to give protection. But I started to fire, partly to get used to my new rifle, and partly to keep the heads of the fascists down in the telephone exchange.

Angel and I ran down to the back of the telephone exchange. From the Columbus Hotel, on the other side of the square, came further firing. From our cover we gathered a few men around us to march on to the Hotel. As we marched on, we stopped dead in our tracks.

The street was packed with Civil Guards. There they were, our old enemy, 400 of them, armed with automatic weapons and rifles. We all felt we were dead men. We waited for them to fire. But they did not do so. They waved us on. I marched on slowly, my group following me. We thought we would be shot in the back. But we were mistaken. They were allies. They had stayed loyal to the Republican Government. It was hard to think that we now had such new friends. This was how it was during the early days of the civil war. There had been a shift in alliances. It was not always possible to recognise the enemy.

We went into the building behind the Columbus Hotel. It was an apartment house, with a bank on the ground floor. I ran up the first flight of stairs, rushed into the first door and saw three men with pistols. They were taken by surprise, and surrendered. They had a small post there with pistols and grenades. Some of the men with me wanted to shoot them down. I stopped them. We locked the door on them instead, after disarming them. When we left Angel threw the key away.

There were now nine of us, all armed. We went upstairs to the flat roof which overlooked the Columbus Hotel. Fascists in the hotel shouted to us not to fire, just as I was preparing to throw one of the grenades I had just taken from the flat below. We shouted over the gunfire.

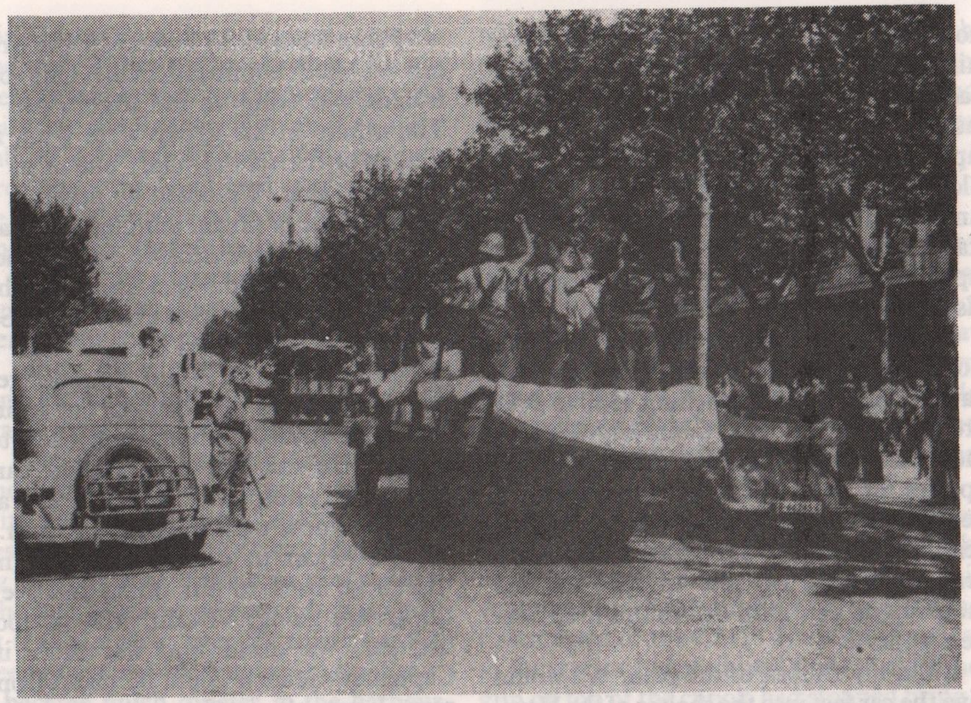
"We will surrender but not to you," their spokesman shouted. "Only to the Civil Guards."

"Right," I said. "Stop shooting and we will fetch the Civil Guards." We went down to the street and to the colonel in charge of the two companies of Civil Guards. I told him that the rebel post in the Columbus Hotel would surrender to him and he ordered his men into the Plaza de Cataluna so that he could accept the surrender on the front steps.

But as the Guards marched into the square in view of the telephone exchange, there was a great outburst of firing. The Guards threw themselves on the ground — so did we. Then they opened fire with their modern Mauser rifles, the best weapons then available in Spain. I fired a few shots with my Reminton, but the range was too great.

The firing stopped suddenly. The Guards went into the hotel and disarmed the rebels inside it. Then the telephone exchange stopped firing. A squad of uniformed police marched in and led the fascists away. The rebels in Barcelona were beginning to realise they had stirred up a hornet's nest. The whole of the people were against them. They were afraid to fall into the hands of the workers and preferred to surrender to the State forces which they knew, and which had always been on their side.

The machine gun stopped firing at the



The militia takes possession of the paseo de Gracia.

officers' club too. There was peace in the square, broken only by the moaning of an injured man who lay behind a small car which had been driven down into the level square and overturned, as a barricade.

I went with my group to the officers' club. I recognised the young officer in charge, who lived near me. He gave his pistol up to the uniformed police. The dead mules in the square had been hauling a small, four-wheeled wagon and the police now dragged this over to the officers' club and ordered the soldiers to throw their arms in it. I watched and saw one soldier with a brand new Mauser. I told him to give it to me.

He refused. "You aren't one of the Republican police. You're one of the rabble." I grabbed his gun and we fought for it. I hit him with the butt of my pistol and he let it go. I then ordered him to take off his bandolier which held 150 rounds of ammunition. This he did. I threw my Remington to one of my group, fastened the bandolier over my shoulder and looked around. This was how our movement was arming itself that fateful day. In no part of Spain would the Government let us have arms. Yet it faced mortal peril from the Army and the danger of foreign intervention. What we got we had to take for ourselves.

Down by the harbour there was shouting. I took a car nearby, a very small one, and four of us clambered in. We drove the mile or so down to the harbour past groups of running people waving pistols, and shouting about their various successes all over the town. On the vehicles they were chalking CNT-FAI. Part of the town was by now in the hands of the people. The uniformed police had decided to stay by the Republic. We did not trust the Civil Guard. There were ironic cheers of 'Long live the Republic' as they passed. They were a military force who went with the stronger side but they had always been against us. Although they had in the main taken no sides, we all believed they would come down on the side of the Generals' junta.

Once down at the harbour, we found

another crowd behind the Civil Government building. In front of them was a big open space which led on to the harbour. To the left was the Naval School, and to the right the Captaincy-General. From the first floor balcony of this building there was a machine gun nest. It was impossible to approach. The attack on the important buildings around the Captaincy-General was held up because of this outpost.

Our group in the car sized up the situation. We saw that some light artillery was drawn up in a line approaching 1500 to 2000 yards away from the Captaincy-General. They had been brought there as fresh supplies for the soldiers, but the troops had been driven off. The guns were just lying there. They were '75s. If we could reach them we would be able to take out the machine gun nest with one round fired over open sights.

I told my friends of the plan. We would drive the car fast into the shelter of the Naval School. Then I would make a dash for the line of guns. We started out. The car went like hell, but 25 yards from the cover of the school, the machine gun caught us. The driver was hit badly in the leg«. The engine was hit. I dived out of the back door and ran for the guns. I slithered behind the one nearest to me and sheltered behind the gunshield as the gunner tracked me over the open space. I was terrified. As I doved for the cover I felt a sudden stab. I was wounded in the leg. I pulled up my trouser leg and and dabbed at the blood. But it was not a bullet wound. Just a piece of flying stone. Nothing of consequence.

I searched the guns. In vain. There were four guns but not a single shell. As I crouched, the machine gunner from the balcony of the Captaincy swept the line of guns, realising the danger if we had shells and could have fired back. I sat there, protected by the vase of the gun, for fifteen minutes, unable to move, the gun firing at me all the time with occasional bursts scattered round the open space to drive back the groups who, here and there, tried to make a front attack.

From where I lay I could see the wrecked car we had commandeered. One of our friends was lying on the street close by it. The others in the group were lying in the shelter of the school. Only one of us had a rifle with him. We could do nothing. Then suddenly, after fifteen minutes, the machine gunner must have decided I was dead. He switched target and began firing elsewhere. I sprinted across the open to the Naval School walls, and joined my friends and other people lying there. I said we must get our friend into cover. We crawled out again into the open space, grabbed him back to the school. He was put into another car and driven off to hospital. I never saw him again. I do not know what happened to him.

We began to discuss our next move, "Let's go back to our union and see how things are going," I said. Maybe, too, we decided, we could find out there if the Captaincy-General could be taken from the rear. I ran off, in the cover of the Naval School, to an arcade from which one could see the machine gun but be protected by pillars from it. There I saw an astonishing sight. Trundling down the via Layetana close by the Post Office and some fifty yards from me, was another 75mm gun, hauled by one of the biggest men in the docks, Manuel Lecha.

It was hailed with delight, and Manuel earned a nickname that day "the Artilleryman" which he never lived down and by which he was affectionately known throughout Barcelona henceforth. We met again many years later. He was on trial with me in 1952.

I shouted to him to bring the gun over to the arcade so that we could silence the machine gun.

"I know, I know," he said. "Wait, wait. This isn't a toy pistol! I'm coming!"

Manuel laid the gun in the shelter of the fashionable arcade. It roared out and a slice of a marble pillar close by was gouged out. That crater could be seen for many years.

The second round was a bullseye. It hit the machine gun square on. Immediately the

Captain-General, a man named Goded, surrendered. This was a great success for us. We were disorganised, just individuals who had joined in the fighting without directives from above — he was the head of the military in Barcelona. Any combined attack on the people of Barcelona would be directed by him and his staff. But we had cut off the head of the tiger. After some weeks, when order was restored in Barcelona, this Goded and another general were executed after being found guilty in a military court of high treason. He had obeyed the orders of the Generals' junta, at whose head was General Mola. The Army conspiracy had, in fact, been headed by General Sanjurjo, with Mola next in superiority. Both died in plane crashes very early in the civil war. Goded was clearly in a state of treason to the government he had sworn to protect. He was shot. But at that moment, after his surrender, he had been given into the hands of the police.

It became much quieter in the harbour area after Goded had surrendered. There were huge crowds milling in front of the Captain-General's house and booing and cheering as the soldiers were brought out and disarmed.

Meanwhile the Military Government surrendered to the Assault Guards of the Republican police. We all marched on the Army HQ, and found that five army officers were being protected by the police. The crowd demanded them, and threatened the police that they would take them by force. They wanted revenge for the killings of the day. Realising they were outnumbered, the Assault Guards surrendered the officers. We took them along to the transport union for judgment.

We had a conference upstairs, together with members of the transport union. I went up to ask what should be done with the officers. I had not wanted to take them, but since it was the will of the crowd, I thought it best that the union deal with them. As we were talking, however, we heard shots. I ran downstairs to find that the officers had been killed by the growing crowd below, many of whose friends and relatives had died in the rebellion. I felt bad about this. These men had been shot in cold blood. That was not our way of doing things. But it was impossible to talk to the crowd. "Barcelona is ours!" they shouted. "They shall not kill us as they have always liked to do!"

Angel and I went outside, where we saw Buenaventura Durruti. He had not seen what was happening, but the crowd soon gathered around him, for he had an outstanding personality, and already he was being spoken of as a general of the people, who would wield this unorganised mass into a fighting force that would save Spain from its enemies.

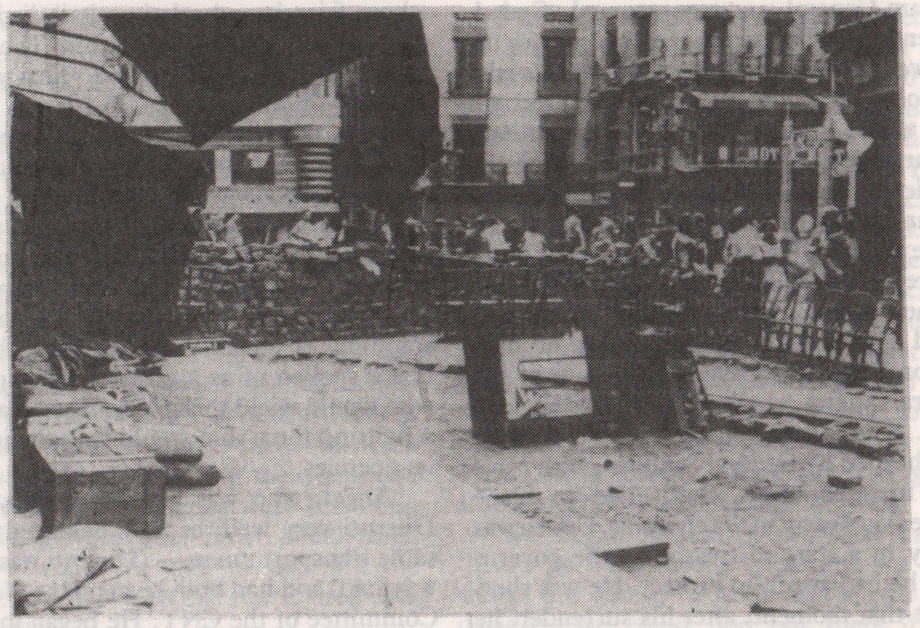
Angel, who was a tramwayman, knew Durruti very well, as they belonged to the same transport union — (Durruti was a railwayman) and had both been on the National Committee of the CNT. He began to speak to Durruti, when we heard that the machine-gun on top of the cupola had stopped firing.

"We will go along there if you will hold the crowd," said Angel. "The square is empty. Maybe the sniper has given up". He agreed, and we went along. All was silence in the square. In case the firing began again, we took shelter behind a shattered tram terminal point. Then we saw that a white flag was flying from Atarazanas Barracks, the same that had flown it in the morning and then — by accident or design — shot Ascaso when he went forward to talk. We were unsure of whether to approach or not. But the great square was exposed. We were in their line of fire anyway. Cautiously we approached.

A bespectacled young *alferez* (a cadet lieutenant, equivalent in the Army to a midshipman) asked for surrender.

"Right," we said. "Let us go back to the Columbus and when we're there you can come out."

As we returned to the Rambla, we saw the crowd waiting eagerly. A shot rang out from somewhere. I put a handkerchief on my rifle and called out to Durruti desperately, for the shot had been the signal for all the



A barricade (1936) in the calle Hospital, Barcelona — part of the Gothic Quarter, and an anarchist stronghold.

crowd at the door of the union to open fire. "Hold them back!" we cried. This was why Barcelona proliferated with initials. It was not just a burst of sectarian enthusiasm that induced us all to show our colours and affiliation. Otherwise we should have been shooting at each other rather than at the enemy.

They uttered a great roar when they saw the alferez.

"Take him to the union," said Durruti. "Francisco cannot be resurrected...." But he had completely lost control of the crowd by now. The officer had up to then been arrogant, but now he began to tremble. He was crying. He was only a boy. "We joined to defend the people," he began. There was an outburst of laughter which drowned what Durruti was trying to say. "Where — in Morocco?" they were shouting. One man with a rifle in his hand pushed his way to the front. "I will show you how to defend the people," he shouted. He raised his rifle and hit the alferez in the face.

Half the face seemed to disappear. Blood squirted out. Other blows rained upon the alferez. He was dead before his body hit the street. There was an outburst of cheering. Angel Garcia, Durruti and I all shouted at them to stop, but they would not listen. Two soldiers came out. They rushed across the square. Durruti lost control of them. We shouted to them to hold back but they were mad for revenge. They clustered round the alferez, jeering, ugly with hatred. "You killed Ascaso," they shouted.

"Wait!" cried Durruti. "Francisco is dead...."

"Yes!" they interrupted. "Here is his murderer, this time they'll pay for it!

"Don't degrade yourself to their level," began Durruti. "Fight them, don't assassinate as they do..."

They began to calm down. The other soldiers stood there terrified. Now they let them go.

Over by what had been the drink kiosk for the tramwaymen, I found a young soldier dying. He had been shot, and I gave him some rum.

"Maybe this is the chap with the machine gun," said Angel. But we did not know this. Perhaps he was the man who had silenced the

machine gunner, a soldier who had come over to us. Who at this moment could tell friend from foe? The medical orderlies came running up as we shouted, and they carried him off.

Then there was general panic. The sound of a diving aircraft. A small single-engined aircraft was wheeling and climbing over the sea. It levelled off, headed inland and dived, got nearer and nearer. It opened fire again, the bullets thudded into the cupola of the monument.

The man in the cockpit was, I later learned, a popular local aerobatic pilot named Muntadas. He had decided on his own to attack the sniper in the monument. But he came too late.

Everyone thought it was a Fascist and rushed for shelter. Fortunately the pilot realised the change of situation in time, and veered off.

Now the firing had died away, apart from the odd burst of sniping. Everyone was talking excitedly of the victory that had been won.

"Now you will see, Italy and Germany will step in to protect their pals," they said. "It's war!"

The Socialist and Communist newspapers made great play of this. They had formed the Popular Front, which now had a parliamentary majority. It was certain, they felt, that if the Axis came in, their friends abroad would come in. The Popular Front was in power in France, under Socialist leadership and with Communist support. As for Russia, who of them could doubt that it would be first in the fight against Hitler?

By now the old city of Barcelona was entirely in the hands of the people. While we had been fighting in the area of the Ramblas and the harbour, there had been a great battle in the Paralelo, the main road from the old city out to Madrid. Garcia Oliver, Ricardo Sanz and others had organised the building of a large barricade of paving stones which had been thrown up to stop troops entering the city from the Lepanto barracks. About two thousand soldiers in this barracks had marched on the barricades. But the officers could not order them to advance, despite orders from the Captain General. Many of the troops were conscripts and had no taste for the job. There were a few skirmishes, and deaths. But after a while the troops fell back.

Everywhere it was the same story. "What is this damned fool Government doing? Why doesn't it release arms to the people? The Government armouries were locked and barred against the people. The Army was the only legal power that could withdraw them and the Army was in revolt. "Are they waiting until Hitler walks in, or what?"

In Madrid things were going well, we heard. The rebellion had been checked with ease. In most parts of the country the Army was beleaguered, held in its garrisons, unable to do more than withstand the people who encircled it, as in the famous siege of Alcazar. Saragossa was another story. The Army was in strength there, and was in desperate fighting with the CNT. If only the Government had released the arms to the CNT, the war would have been over in a week. The offensive military might of the generals within Spain had been smashed by workers who were now trying to overrun the garrisons. It was desperately urgent that arms be released before the Army in Morocco should move in. There it had arms in plenty. It was disciplined, ready. It had Moorish mercenaries too, though most people reckoned it unthinkable that in a civil war with Spaniards the super-patriotic right wing generals would use Moorish troops.

Inside Barcelona, the fortress of San Andreas had surrendered by the 21st. From there the cannon used by Flecha had come. But there were forts ringing the city which had a further supply of soldiers. In fact, though I did not know it at the time, there were columns of troops which had set out in a bid to rally round the Captaincy-General, but it had been prevented by crowds of thousands upon thousands, only a few of whom were armed. The soldiers could have got through, but only by a general massacre.

These were conscript troops and they would not do it. Their own kinsfolk might have been amongst the crowd. They threw up their arms and fraternised. The officers fled.

In some parts of the town the mob set fire to the churches. This happened all over Spain. For years one finds a priest ruling with absolute arrogance and in close co-operation with the local landowner. When he finds that some labourer does not come to church on Sunday and prefers to spend his time in the wineshop, he sends for the man's wife, catechises her, warns her. If her husband does not come, next day, standing around like cattle to be hired by the landowner, he finds himself passed over for work. Soon the husband gets the message. Then, in times of civil disturbance, a mob ransacks the church. The priest flees. Silver-haired professors with goldrimmed spectacles then write, in their calm cloistered studies abroad, that this is due to the influence of the Spanish Anarchists, who — hot and dusty, tired out from the battle against the authorities, have come back to the village exhausted, to harangue the mob in voices hoarse with fatigue not to engage in such pointless activity.

Were there atrocities that day in Barcelona? There were a number. In many cases the crowd raided the barracks and of the armed police and the prefecture of police, the places where they had been beaten up and tortured. They naturally would not stand on niceties in dealing with the soldiers or the police where these were in rebellion. But in many cases the police met them with bland assurances of their loyalty to the Republic. "We are keeping our oath, we are loyal to the Constitution," they would say. "Yesterday we had you in custody — that is true. It was our duty. Today we are dealing with Fascists, rebels, traitors! We understand that you are anarchists, you do not want a police force. Very good, but you must understand you now have allies who do believe in the State — the republicans, the socialists, the communists. We are serving the constitution, long live the Popular Front!" These police would show themselves the more assiduous in torturing and shooting the Fascist prisoners whom they had. Many of them may not have been Fascists, just middle-class people who sympathised with the Army or the Right Wing generally. But the police had to show their enthusiasm to cover up their suspect past and even more suspect future. They more than anyone insisted that no arms be released to the syndicalist movement which was the only real force that was holding back the Army.

Before the day was over, we heard that yet another column of troops was intending to surrender. This was on the rue Diagonale, a main road on the outskirts of the town.

"Great," I said when I heard it. "Come along and we'll take their surrender."

There was a young captain there, with two hundred men. He was a smooth talker. "We've no intention of fighting against Spaniards," he said. "I have Goded's orders, but I'm not obeying them."

We told him Goded was captured. He professed surprise and delight.

"Let the men go back to their homes and families," I said. "The war against Spaniards is over for you."

Later I could have kicked myself for my mistake, the only one I had made that day. The officer probably knew already that Goded was captured. He only wanted to get out of a tight situation. We should have kept the soldiers with us. They were good troops, and their propaganda value would have induced other soldiers to have joined us. As it was they went off, still with their arms. Most of them left Barcelona, and probably many of them ultimately joined up with the Regular Army again — Franco's Army. It was their career. We had let ourselves be tricked.

But that was the end of the Army's bid to take over our city. As night fell there was sporadic fighting with Falangist sympathisers and other Right Wing elements, but the Army was out of it. Whenthe civilian rebels learned of the collapse of the Army, the heart went out of their fighting. Barcelona was ours in less than twenty-four hours. The turning point had come when Manuel had lugged that old 75 up to the arcade, and blown out the machine gun nest. Once the Captain-General surrendered, there was no one to give orders. Nor was there any senior officer left with the desire and stomach to fight the entire city.

I went home. I had been blooded. I had fired, maybe killed. I had been involved in some ugly scenes I would not like to see again. But Barcelona was ours, it belonged to the people. I was too exhausted to sleep and my blood was racing. Halfway through the night I took my rifle and walked through the city. There were many people I had known from union struggles over the years doing the same. "S alud!" they cried out. Here and there fires were burning. The brigades were dashing through the streets, bells clanging. Here looters and fired shops and stores, even some private houses belonging to well known Falangists or Right Wing politicians. The firemen were trying to save the art treasures from one of the churches. Many youngsters were dancing around the squares, singing, stamping their feet, laughing. "Barcelona is ours!" they cried as I walked by.

November 1936 — Celebrating the anniversary of the Russian Revolution in Barcelona's Ramblas.

CHAPTER 3
THE ARAGON FRONT

The militia go off to the front.

That night there was no sleep for anybody. Barcelona was seething with excitement. Barcelona was ours indeed! With the crushing of the fascist rising, there was no authority left. The power of the people in the street had become so great that the Government could only appeal to them for loyalty. Everywhere they flocked to the union centres, which for so many years had been the base of their struggles. The workers in the factories took over. The pistoleros hired by the employers fled to cover. Many were shot outright. In many cases the employers too fled the city, leaving their villas and their warehouses and their factories to the workers who had been working for them for so long.

The president of the Generalitat of Catalonia Company, although a Catalanist, had been the defending lawyer for the CNT in many cases. He acknowledged that power lay in the hands of the anarcho-syndicalist workers. "We are only here to serve you," he said. It was regarded humorously by the man in the street who knew that now the Republic had thrown away its chance of controlling the Army, the only force left to defend it were the people whom it had persecuted so long.

Everywhere they criticised the government. "Why aren't they even now throwing these bastard generals out of their jobs? It's too late but at least let them try." The generals were still in the service of the Republic they were betraying, and still they had not been sacked from their jobs. In one ship in the Navy, the sailors took it into their own hands to throw the officers overboard, and affirm their loyalty to the Republic. Only when the generals had organised themselves in a formidable body in Morocco, and moved into Spain with the help of the Italian Navy, and using Moorish mercenaries, did it at last occur to the government to stigmatise the generals as traitors. But even then it hesitated. It would not let the CNT-FAI have arms. "Arm the Anarchists?" they cried. "Never! We would sooner the Army won!" But after the first few days it was impolitic to say this in public. Instead they began crying for discipline, order, unity.

The Communist Party was still insignificant in Catalonia, though growing in the rest of Spain. People who had been compromised in the fight against the CNT, the remaining pistoleros of the employers, some of the rapacious small shopkeepers, and so on, rushed for protection into the unified Catalan Socialist-Communist Party. Soon they were able to flourish the party cards in their protection and cry "No sectarianism! Russia will be our ally!" Day after day the Communist Party proclaimed that the hour of deliverance was at hand. The Popular Front in France was in power in France, and it passed hundreds of encouraging resolutions. Russia displayed its strength in thousands of leaflets that appeared on the streets. Every day people expected the sky to be blackened with the Russian planes....

Meanwhile, we heard that in Saragossa the army was holding out. It was a town in which our movement had thousands of adherents. Next to Barcelona, it was the city in which the libertarian movement was most cherished. Its strategic importance to Catalonia was vital. The CNT-FAI took over a huge new office block in the via Layetana, displacing a major banking concern that now had no part in the new Spain, and in our new HQ we decided that Saragossa must be relieved.

First it was necessary to clean up Barcelona. I seemed to be rushing everywhere, without stopping, checking on snipers' nests, organising comrades to winkle them out, firing at them myself. For we were a completely "undisciplined rabble". None of us were soldiers. Many had done military service, but there was no organised fighting unit. The anarchist groupings formed fighting units of their own. As workers gathered at their union headquarters, so they agreed to form separate little groups to go out crushing what remained of the rebellion. On the first day we were out we came across a lorry that had been used as a road block in the city. It was filled with ice. We got it going again, and went to a hospital to see if they needed our load, and all the time we were driving through the streets the snipers were firing at us.

In the first hospital I saw my first batch of seriously wounded. They were lying around, crammed together, men of all parties and none. The mortuary was filled with corpses but they had plenty of ice. I got out as soon as I could and went on to another hospital.

On the way we passed the harbour where we had fought so hard the day before. I saw a couple of Scandinavians, sailors probably, walking away from the docks with huge sacks in each hand. I pulled up and asked them what they had in the sacks. In halting Spanish they explained it was tobacco.

"We aren't making a revolution so people can rob — give us the tobacco," I said. They handed it over quite willingly. When we got to the second hospital, which did need our ice, we distributed the tobacco among the wounded.

It was in this way that order returned to Barcelona. In a very short space of time our groups had gathered and decided to try to form some sort of an army. It was an entirely novel experience. All our lives we had fought against war. Our experience was more how to sabotage an army being formed — usually for aggression in Morocco — than it was to form one ourselves. But by this time every man and woman in Barcelona knew that we had stormed the heavens. The generals would never forgive us for what we had done. We had humiliated and defeated the Army, we — an unorganised, indisciplined

the world. They sent out letters begging people not to come, but to put pressure on their home governments either for arms to the Republic or against arms to the rebels. Meanwhile the Communist Party invited the world to come in. Foreigners from all countries flocked to join the International Brigade which proved of enormous propaganda value to the Communists... though still the ever-announced, ever-expected, help from France and Russia failed to arrive...

It was a fantastic procession that set off through the villages of Catalonia. Everyone was driving in cars they had requisitioned. There was a profusion of initials chalked on the side showing their political allegiance. We cheered as we passed CNT FAI cars. Everyone had guns, but they were mainly pistols and Winchesters. Most of our people liked the Winchesters, though they had the opportunity of taking Mausers from the soldiers who had surrendered. I felt that Mausers were better, more accurate, less troublesome. I urged on everyone to collect the Mausers from soldiers who surrendered. Despite the profusion of small arms, there were none to spare. I tried to collect some lorry loads of rifles and ammunition to pass on to our friends in Saragossa, but there were none.

Whenever we met republican troops we urged on the commandants, "Arms, arms, let's have arms for Saragossa — what's your idiot of a republic doing, starving us of arms? Are they waiting to give them to Hitler when he marches in, or what?" Always we were met with the same response. "Order, discipline, patience, remember we are allies now, you must be responsible people."

Patience? Everywhere the fascists were marching on to the cities. Their garrisons were holding out in Seville until the relieving army could reach them from Morocco. The government was waiting for France and Russia to come with the resignation of orthodox Jews awaiting the Messiah.

The six of us in our Packard reached Tarega, when the Packard burst a tyre going along a main road. It ended on its side in a ditch. "Well," I told my friend. "You said we didn't have to make ourselves deliberately uncomfortable but I still think we should have been better off in a rough duty car."

We found a garage in the town. The proprietor told us that it would take some days to mend the car. "But don't worry," he said. "There are plenty here. Help yourselves, your union has commandeered the lot."

"This time we get something for heavy work," I said. We chose a six cylinder Opel, almost brand new. In it we pressed on to Saragossa, passing through towns and villages where the people stood out and waved as we passed by. We looked a real load of brigands, for many were unshaven, some had bandages over slight wounds, and some lucky ones like myself had bandoliers over our shoulders. But the people of the villages were becoming used to strange sights. In Valencia, the Government had agreed to release the prisoners from San Miguel de los Reyes, a prison I was later to come to know well. They volunteered for the Teruel front, and as the Iron Column, officered by militants from the Anarchist Federation, did heroic work in the fighting. Thus, gradually, a people's army was being formed... from the unions, from all the political groupings, even from the prisons, from the police units of the republic. In Barcelona, down in the slum quarters of the Barrio Chino, the whores were carried away by the general enthusiasm. They made short work of the ponces and pistoleros who had preyed upon them for so long. "Away with this life, we will fight on the side of the people!" they cried. It was a great joke to the foreign journalists, who regarded the unfortunate women as less than human and anything they did ridiculous of itself. Some reporters went so far as to say they had seized control of the brothels and were operating them under workers' control... In fact, they volunteered to fight in the front lines. Later, this proved an embarrassment. Gradually their units were disbanded. Many of them went into nursing or into the war factories, some — as

normality returned — went back to their old profession.

At Caspe we had our baptism of fire. It is a small town on the river Ebro and as we crossed the bridge there was a burst of firing. The car stopped and we tumbled out, crouching behind a small stone hut used by road menders. But there were only five of us. One stayed in the car. He had been killed.

In front of us on both sides of the dusty road were olive groves of trees, twisted and thick, which stretched up to the entrance of the town. The land was flat, the grass was dried by the sun to a brown, light oak colour. In front of us were several cars where the occupants had been caught, as we were. In them were dead and wounded.

"We have reached the front now," said one of the cooks, laconically.

Peering cautiously across, I saw a Guardia Civil. We were facing an organised military body, some of the best marksmen in Spain. We were in the presence of the enemy.

"Who goes there?" shouted Antonio, one of our party — a chef who had exchanged his whites for the overalls that were now becoming almost universal. It was some men who had been caught in the cars, and were now crawling towards us.

"Don't shoot!" they cried. We waved them to join us in the stone hut.

"We must crawl round the outside of the grove, one group to the right, one to the left. We must take them from behind," I said.

Everyone applauded loudly. "On, on, they're waiting for us in Saragossa."

I crawled off to the right, shooting into the trees. My group and the others forced our way round foot by foot, cautiously approaching from behind each tree. Soon we had mopped up the guards. Bodies of the Guardia Civil lay everywhere. Not one of them came out of the olive grove alive. Our men too littered the ground, dead and wounded. But we had opened the way to the town. Later the procession of cars and taxis rattling their way from Barcelona wended its way through the road we had opened.

CNT militiaman at the front, July 1936.

As the men from Barcelona came out of their cars, the wounded were packed back in, to be driven back over the bumpy roads to the nearest hospital. There were no stretcher bearers, no first aid posts, no doctors. All was improvised on the spur of the moment. Later the foreign observers came along, sophisticated military men with strong sympathies for the Communists. They heartily despised this indisciplined rabble, but agreed that little else could be expected from those who had the double misfortune to be both Spanish and Anarchist... it never occurred to them that men called away from their everyday work at a moment's notice to rush to fight the national army of their country could hardly be expected to do much more than improvise during the first weeks of battle.

We endeavoured to assault the main entrance to Caspe. Here we were driven off

by heavy fire from more Guardia Civil. There was, we learned later, a full company, led by a captain, in the town. We switched our attack to a smaller entrance to the town, to the right of the main gateway.

We forced our way in, running, firing, crawling. We reached a street, turned left and found ourselves on the way to the main road of the town. But all along it the Guards had formed barricades of mattresses and they fired from behind them. The Captain, named Negrete, took the widow of the town's mayor, who had been shot by the fascists in the town square the day before the civil war began, and held her in front of a group on the balcony of the hotel she owned, as a protection for himself. But our men had climbed on to the rooftops to dominate the barricades. There were some sharpshooters amongst them, and they shot down Captain Negrete and the men with him. The woman was unharmed, though hysterical with fear.

But such sharpshooters were few on our side. The disciplined fire of the Guardia Civil began to tell. The men on the roofs were shot off, and withering fire met our attempts at storming the barricades.

It was nearly a massacre. "Out, out, out!" I yelled to men around me. We retreated, still firing, dashing back to the olive grove and back to the cars. The body of our comrade, Paret, was still in our car. We took it and buried him. Then we gathered round the groups who had come clear of the town. Many had wounded in their cars which they were taking back to hospital. We agreed that there was no way of resuming the battle for Saragossa until more arms came to the front.

"Tell them back in Barcelona we must have the weapons, we cannot fight with bare fists." We especially pleaded with the socialists and republicans who had connections in the government. "Are your people mad, or what? We cannot fight this war with the bits of pistols we can find ourselves. By the time your pals the Russians get here Hitler will be in the Escorial!"

It never occurred even to us that Russia had not the least intention of intervening. That Britain and France would stand aside was unthinkable. But Russia? We all knew it to be a dictatorship, but at least we thought it was anti-fascist.

Just outside the town the fighting groups got together for a conference. Some said they would stay to hold the front, some were taking their wounded back. Meanwhile those going back would contact our union headquarters to see if we could organise some liaison between all our groups. "You must unite with us, too," insisted the socialists. "Now we are all brothers." They urged that we contact the Army garrison which was loyal to the Republic, and I went with my group to Lerida. There we contacted Captain Zamora, who said he would co-operate in the struggle to take Saragossa. He had at his disposal two hundred troops and four 75 cannons, driven by Lieutenant Garrido. With them, we came back over the bridge into the olive grove, and in a line of skirmish, approached the main entrance to the town.

There were no shots. The town was clear. The Guardia Civil had pulled out. At least, so we thought. Then two men in shirt

sleeves, out of uniform, ran out with their hands up. They surrendered to our group.

"Don't shoot, we're republicans!" one of them cried. "We've hidden in the town, we've come to fight with you."

From behind me I heard a shot. Both men dropped dead at my feet. I turned angrily. It was one of my comrades who had come with me from Barcelona, a grey haired veteran of many struggles.

"You fool, they were on our side," I raged at him. "Didn't you hear what he said?"

"I heard plain enough," he retorted calmly, changing the magazine on his rifle.

I was furious. "It was murder, you had no right to do it."

"Miguelito, I've lived with these people thirty years longer than you have," he said. "Guardia Civil are all the same. Have you never been beaten up by them? On our side? Believe me, they are best dead. Then they will never betray us."

I raged at him and threatened him but he was impervious to anything I said. Later, over the years, I came to know he was right. They could never be trusted, not so far as the people were concerned. Their traditions, their training, all militated against it. Perhaps it suited them to go with the legal government. But so soon as power shifted, their allegiance would shift with it.

Next day we buried our dead in the churchyard of Caspe. The soldiers chatted with us, and we talked long and earnestly about the situation. It would be a long war. The Army was checked in some places, but it was getting dug in at other places. If we were to go on fighting, there would have to be companies with officers, with their own supply trains and artillery. It was all very well our groups of five or six operating as guerilla bands, but they were no good in a frontal attack against prepared positions. We began to talk of the new plan — regiments of a hundred men each, commanded by a centurion. Each century had ten squads. It was a reversion to the old Roman legion. Some of these regiments held fast to their political allegiances, others were "mixed". They picked their own officers.

During the next day or so, our regiments began to form in Caspe. We reconnoitred and found that the enemy was strongly dug in between us and the city of Saragossa. We saw trenches being dug and field guns put into place. It was fortunate for us they were

EL FRENTE

C. N. T. — BOLETIN DE GUERRA DE LA COLUMNA DURRUTI — F. A. I.

AÑO I | Pina de Ebro, 27 de agosto de 1936 | NUM. 3

TODOS ADELANTE; NINGUNO HACIA ATRAS

Este Comité Central recibe diariamente innumerables peticiones de permisos para ausentarse de la columna por uno o varios días. Esto representa un constante desplazamiento de milicianos y un ir y venir de personal que altera todo posible control de las centurias, y que hace imposible toda distribución regular de conseguir con constancia y con energía el triunfo.

No nos vengan a pedir, por tanto, permisos de ausencia con pretextos fútiles. El nacimiento de un hijo, la jaqueca de una compañera, la falta de noticias de un familiar, no pueden, no deben influir en la desorganización de nuestra columna.

Desde Barcelona vinimos. Los caminos quedaron a nuestra espalda, claros y limpios. El que no sirva para recorrerlos hacia adelante, sin mirar atrás, que vuelva la espalda definitivamente. No haremos comentarios sobre los ausentes, pero queremos tener el convencimiento de que los

PARA LOS LLAMADOS A FILA

Por acuerdo del Comité de Guerra del frente de Aragón y siempre de acuerdo con el Co-

War Bulletin of the Durruti Column, Pina de Ebro, 27 August 1936.

so concerned with defence, for if they had attacked Caspe at that time all they would have had against them was one company of soldiers and three or four hundred workingmen. But although undisciplined, we were well organised and our groups were equal to any company. We were not afraid to tackle one. We were used of old to tackling the Guardia Civil. Those belonging to the CNT had strong morale, and while we might not be able to muster sufficient force for face to face fighting with seasoned troops, our boys were always ready to clamber on to roofs and hut round corners, tackling the enemy with vigour.

We would search around for the best positions to open fire, as we tried to advance from Caspe to Saragossa, and inlficted the major casualties without thinking of the consequences to themselves, so that the libertarians were worth half-a-dozen professional soldiers marching on set positions in a disciplined way.

Soon we were reinforced by six hundred men from Barcelona who had come up by train, with waggons carrying artillery and machine guns. Ortiz was in command. He had already organised his men into centuries, and with Capt. Zamora he began to prepare for trench warfare. Thus the Aragon Front was born. There was to be bitter fighting on it in the years to come. But always it was starved of arms. It was whispered that the Communists feared that there would be too great prestige for the libertarian movement if it took Saragossa. They wanted victory, but they wanted it under their command. There were arms arriving from Russia, but we were not to see them.

Nevertheless, by the end of August Ortiz, in co-operation with a loyal Army colonel, decided it was time to attack Saragossa. We were by now sufficiently well integrated to form a coherent fighting force. Our first objective was the town of Belchita, on the hills, which dominated the smaller towns around it, and lay at the entrance of the plain to Saragossa. Belchita was the key to Saragossa, for with it in our hands there was no natural barrier to the city.

We attacked up hill through the vineyards. But it was suicide. The fascists had machine gun emplacements from which they dominated the hillsides. We stumbled, half running, half crouching, towards them. Mortars opened up. The first lines of our advancing men were cut down. Reading of the First World War, I had come across the phrase "scything down". It was literally true. I saw it happen as though a great knife started at one end of the line and swished through to the end. I lay there in a drainage gutter among the bodies of my friends as death passed overhead. It was impossible to move. The colonel stood up and waved his men on. But there was no one left to wave on. How it was that he was not killed I do not know. Later I heard he was shot as a traitor at the Huesca front by the Republicans, trying to pass over to the enemy with maps and plans.

The few survivors of that disastrous attack retreated. We stood out of range and out of sight of the enemy. We were haggard and weary. The battle for Belchita took less than an hour. I aged ten years during that hour. We were never to take Saragossa. Attempt after attempt was made against those murderous machine guns. Always we longed for heavy artillery. Delegation after delegation visited the Aragon front, representatives of the Popular Front, leaders of the Republic, socialists, republicans. Always we cried to them, "When are you going to send us heavy artillery? When? When?" Always the same answer: Discipline. Patience. Responsibility. We are all allies now. The artillery is needed for Madrid, the defence of Madrid is vital, wait and our friends abroad will supply all you need. You are not alone, the whole democratic world is behind you, wait, tomorrow we will send you an English trade union leader, a Czech deputy, an American liberal, a refugee professor from Germany... they will tell you that the whole world is behind us and you will not want for aid from the democracies...

CHAPTER 4
THE MADRID FRONT

By November I was in Madrid. General Mola boasted that the city was wide open; he had columns marching from the north, south, east and west, and a "fifth column" inside the city itself. Everyone thought that Madrid would fall before the month was out. Our defiant slogan was "They shall not pass". Volunteers had flocked to the capital from all over the Republic. I had been doing an administrative job in Caspe for some weeks. We were checking up on the "fifth column" there, too; and also trying to cut down on the indiscriminate killing of sheep. Some of the republican groups were just going out into the fields and killing one of the animals for food. It had been realised that the was was going to last for a long time. The flocks had to be preserved. The female sheep had to be protected.

It was, I decided, too much like a policeman's job. With the Aragon Front starved of arms as it was, we would not see much more fighting there. The government was appealing for most of the troops to come and defend the capital. Some of the Catalanists complained: "Republican, monarchist, it makes no difference — when they're in trouble they ditch Catalonia and all that counts is Madrid." But the confederal forces poured in though they know the government was obstructing the battle for Saragossa, they wanted to hit hard at world Fascism. Where else could they do it? Amongst them was Durruti. In the fighting on the Madrid front he was killed. He was the most popular figure in the whole republican ranks. The other political brigades hardly dared approach the libertarians when the news of Durruti's death was heard. He had been respected like Segui and Ascaso, and it went very hard with any fascist prisoners who happened to get caught that day. His body was taken back to Barcelona where his funeral cortege almost embraced the entire

Madrid, 20 November 1936 — Durruti lies dead in hospital.

city. Even the republican leaders who had so often signed warrants for his arrest and detention joined in the demonstration: it would hardly have been politic for them to do otherwise. He was buried on the side of the hill of Montjuich, next to the great pioneer of our movement Francisco Ferrer killed by Court martial in the gloomy fortress. There the graves are still.

Perhaps the adulation of him went too far; it occurred to some of us wrily to suggest that it was the same as with Buddha, who spoke against the godhead and was worshipped as a god himself after his death. The via Layetana was re-named the avenida Buenaventura Durruti, which would have caused him some amusement, we felt. Naturally all the political leaders began to to speak of him as a great patriot, which would have afforded him even greater amusement, and as the earth settled over his grave in Montjuich, they even began to suggest he was really one of their own, or was just about to change his opinions.

At that time in Madrid the Communists were also fighting among them many foreigners, including a professional soldier called Captain Paris, who were the nucleus of what later became the International Brigade, recruited by the Communist Parties of the world. There were about a company of them, holding the most dangerous position at Las Rozas and they fought well. Paris himself — a brave soldier — died. Little has been written of him but Captain Paris was a capable and fearless soldier. These men were the nucleus of the 12th Brigade which became part of the international Brigade, led by General Lukas. It had French, Belgians and Germans. The Garibaldi and Dombrowski battalions catered for Italians, and Poles and Yugoslavs, respectively. Many of them were former soldiers of the First World War, others were students or workers, some were hardline party members with whom it was impossible to talk. They knew all the answers and particularly the Germans in the Thaelmann unit were impatient of the Spaniards whom they regarded as backward. Yet one could not help wondering sometimes what had happened to the great disciplined movements in their own countries which they held up as models of organisation, but which had vanished at the first whiff of fascism.

Amongst them I met a certain Josep Broz. The name may be fairly common in Yugoslavia but it seems unlikely there was more than one of them in Spain at the time. I am quite certain that this was the man who subsequently became the famous Marshal Tito, no matter what they tell me to the contrary.

There was not the same hostility between anarchists and communists in the firing line, as there was in Barcelona and the other cities. The communist party was opposed to the workers seizing the factories and taking control; it acted as a conservative force and came into conflict with the revolutionaries. But in the front we knew very little of that. The communists were undoubtedly good fighters. They were devoted to the fight. And they were well armed as we were not. But where was the promised aid from Russia

that was going to see we all had the weapons to defend ourselves?

The fighting was hard and difficult, for the enemy had encamped in good trenches very early on. They had the advantage of having planned the uprising while they were still the only army in the country. Their troops were supported by mortars and artillery. We had no trenches, and just took shelter behind rocks or scraped a hollow in the grounds. It was never quiet on the outskirts of Madrid. Every day there was an attack along the perimeter. We had no natural defences to fall back on. It was an open city and we were simply defending its suburbs. If one lost one's way, one found oneself behind the enemy's lines.

I had only been there five days when I was wounded. As the rebel Army moved in, I could see them face to face. We countered with machine gun firing and they retreated. It was a routine skirmish, but when it was over I felt a great pain in my leg. Then I could feel nothing, but I was standing in a great pool of blood. I tore open my trouser leg to find that a bullet had slashed through. I wrapped a handkerchief round it, and when the fire stopped, I asked for help, as I could not walk. By this time there were organised field ambulances and I went to a special clinic for the wounded for a couple of days to recover.

While I was lying in bed one of the men in the same clinic, a University professor, was interested to learn that I had come from the Aragon Front. "You must help us, Miguel," he said. "I have been able to form two battalions of students, but there's no one to instruct them."

He told me that his students were forming the Madrid Battalion and the Perez Carballo Battalion. The latter had been Governor of Vitoria, an indefatigable youth worker, who had been killed on arrest by the enemy. He was a great Republican, lost because of the decision not to arm the people. Had they done so, Vitoria would have resisted as did Barcelona.

The students ranged from 18 years of age to 25, with seven years of study behind them. They had commandeered their University building and wanted to train there but nobody was available to teach them. I agreed to do it, and while I was still only able to hobble, went over to the barrack they had improvised in Dr. Corteso street, and taught them how to use the rifle, hand grenades, machine guns. How to use our antiquated armoury. How to make use of the terrain, to present the smallest target to the enemy. How to crawl without sticking the backside in the air. All the things we had learned by hard practice in four months on the Aragon front, on top of the military service we had done before. While I was recovering from my wound, I took them through their basic training. The youngster who had been elected leader of the Madrid Battalion asked me to stay with them as lieutenant. I was flattered. They were all enthusiastic and highly intelligent young men and I liked them all.

As soon as they were able to handle their rifles — even perhaps a little before — they were in action on the Madrid front. It was December 1936 and the concentration of forces from all over the Republic had saved the capital. The troops of General Franco were pushed back to the plains beyond Madrid. We were not in this attack, but as soon as the initial force of the drive had died away, we were told to take one and a half companies from the Battalion and take up a position in the front line, so that some of the attacking forces could regroup.

I took our lads, about 300 of the Madrid Battalion, to the front line. We were given three miles or so of rough ground on a hillside to guard. It made us a little thin on the ground, so I picked out places for our gunners higher up the hill so they would have an open field of fire over their heads. All we had were Czech rifles — no machine guns. Just a few Mausers. There were no trenches, so I had to tell the soldier students to gouge holes out of the ground and build up breastworks of rock and stones as a protection. They settled in their positions. Would

they hold them under attack? I wondered.

Every so often the enemy planes zoomed over our heads. They had begun to bomb Madrid. The fury of the capital may well be imagined. They were being bombed from the air not as London and Paris had been during the First World War, by a foreign foe — that was to be expected. This was by the Army they had been bled white to support over many years, people who had taken an oath of allegiance to support their government, traitors who were working with foreign air forces to drop death from the skies on their own people, in a manner then only known from newsreels on the war in China. They took immediate vengeance upon the enemy that lay to hand, the "fifth column" of which General Franco had boasted, in a phrase that became infamous, who were found signalling to the attackers. On one occasion they raided the jails to lynch the prisoners. A prison officer, a Republican who was particularly ferocious to his charges because he wished to show his zealousness and hide the years when he persecuted the now powerful Left Wing, hid a leading Falangist who later became Director General of Prisons. This officer, then what is called 'chef de service' — Foreman warder — in the prison, subsequently became a director in the Barcelona jail after Franco's victory, and I had occasion to cross him as central, and then general, inspector of prisons, and I met him several times in his meteoric career to the top.

During the day we could see the enemy in their trenches on the plains, but they were out of range. The days were usually quiet and it was quite pleasant sometimes to be in the brisk cold of the December sun. But the nights were different. Action began at dusk. Sentries were on the alert in case the enemy approached, ready to throw grenades or shout the alarm. Sometimes nothing would happen and in the morning they came back haggard and cold. Sometimes we would see figures in the dark, machine guns would fire, grenades would burst. We had no mortars. The workers were beginning to build them in basement factories in Madrid. Bullets would fly, embedding in the stone behind us which splintered alarmingly. But those students did not give ground. They fought like veterans. When one hears single shots being fired by automatic weapons one knows one's troops are cool. Firing a burst makes for comfort, for it sounds like power. But results come with single shots. And with ammunition scarce, that is what counts.

We were not relieved for 72 days. We could never relax. Always we expected a major attack. But the enemy held off. I had my headquarters in a small hut near to our section of the line. There we held discussions, planned our strategy, the students would join in the deliberations as to what to do. As yet the groups in the front were not subject to Regular Army discipline. Now we heard that the Republic wanted to incorporate every fighting unit into its unified command. We felt somewhat suspicious about this. Could we trust these people? They had let one Army betray them, could one trust them with another?

The Republicans were adept at making speeches but our movement was making more sacrifices. Faced with so many of our men and women being killed, we sacrificed our dearest principles in allowing ourselves to be represented in the government by a couple of Ministers, in the hope that this might lead to unity and we would get a share of the arms that were now being bought from Mexico and Russia. *Bought* from Russia, be it noted — still these wonderful promises of military aid from Russia had not materialised and even the Popular Front politicians no longer pretended that France was going to help us. But it was hard to believe that the democracies, threatened daily by the Fascist powers, would forever stay aside.

We did get some support from the democracies. Great sums were collected for medical aid. But most of this money was under the control of the Communist Party. The British printers raised huge sums through their Anti-Fascist Committee. But Spanish printers could not benefit — they

"...that brave brigade of youth..." that fought for Madrid without a Government. "It did not get any older, for apart from a few of us, we kept recruiting eighteen year olds. Always first year students, who never would complete their studies. They came out to the famous Madrid Battalion, but they did not go back."

belonged to the "wrong" union, the CNT. The support of the British printers went to members of the UGT, where it did not go directly to the Communists. This happened time and again. Catalonia was starved of support. But on the Madrid front we did get food, great york hams from England, packed in tins. They were very good, but a bit monotonous as our only diet. Some of the men became expert in catching rabbits in nooses. I as a Catalan knew and loved mushrooms, I collected piles of them from the hillside and took them back. These men from Madrid were very suspicious. They could not distinguish between mushrooms and toadstools. But after they saw me feasting on mushrooms cooked in the empty York ham tins they overcame their suspicions, and there were soon many mushroom parties on the hills between firing.

We went for many weeks without salt. You do not miss salt until you do not get any at all, and we tried to scrounge it from other troops. But nobody had any. Then the Figaro Battalion, which was at our right, was replaced by a Tarragona battalion, recently organised, the Jaime Graells. It was led by a medical student, a Basque, with whom I became friendly. He presented me with a great bag of salt from their rations. I thought it best not to mention to him that he was unlikely to get any early replacement for it.

One night I was called from my shed. "Miguel, come, quick, there are strange noises," whispered one of my men. I grinned. He was a townsman all right! I recognised the noise, having spent so much time in the country. I startled the troops by suddenly calling "Line up!"

"What is it?" they asked.

"Dinner," I retorted. The sound they had heard was a cow chewing the cud. It had wandered up to the trench from beyond the lines. I shot it.

"Here you are, here's your dinner," I told them.

We had not had a decent meal in weeks. When dawn came we butchered the cow. My friend the Basque captain was with me in the shed having coffee. Full of his medical knowledge — for he was a fourth year medical student — protested.

"You can't eat that," he advised. "Franco's men have probably poisoned it and sent it over to our lines. Cut a slice off it and sent it to Colmenarejo (the nearby village) for analysis."

We skinned the beast and I sent the skin over to the village with a soldier on our little mule, the friend of all the company. But while we were waiting, I felt really hungry looking at the meat. I took a knife and sliced off a fine piece of rump steak. I held it in front of the fire and started to cook it.

"What are you doing?" asked the captain.

"As a member of the catering union it's my duty to make the sacrifice. I know you're hungry and can't wait for food. I will test the beefsteak for poisoning myself."

There were some grins. One soldier said, "I can't bear to see Miguel make the sacrifice alone," so he sliced another piece. Soon the beast had been shared out, cooked and eaten. When finally the soldier came back from Colmenarejo with his favourable report there only remained him and the captain to make their request.

But such manna from heaven was rare. Before the 72 days was over we even had to eat our poor friend the mule.

The line was being strengthened. Madrid had not fallen. Our troops had been proved invincible in defence. The world looked on with surprise. The republican leaders began speaking of the need for discipline, for militarizing the Army. This was something we thought was crazy. We had the best fighting force in the world so far as defence was concerned. Where else could a people hit back and hold off its own national army, backed by foreign troops whose planes darkened the skies? We could not take the offensive, certainly; but then we had no heavy artillery.

"Will it help us to advance any farther forward if I put a couple of stars on my shoulder?" I asked one visiting statesman.

He insisted that we needed the sort of

military discipline every national army had. "You rushed into war like an undisciplined mob." The soldiers gathered round, jeered. "You think we should have waited for our calling up papers? Who do you think we wanted to fight for, Franco?"

He tried to smooth us down. "Enthusiasm was great in the early days. But now we have got to introduce proper Army methods."

"Why not do a bit of fighting instead?" they asked. "You get the Cortes to get off their arses and come out in the front and see if they can manage any better with the sort of arms we have. If it hadn't been for your republican pals we would have all the arms the fascists have got now!"

He insisted. No recriminations, now we were all allies, brothers. The fascists could get arms from the Axis countries. But we got nothing from the democracies.

"So much for your Popular Front!"

"Leon Blum has got to be impressed, he has to be convinced that we mean business. That is why we have to have a properly disciplined Army." Someone interrupted. "Blum? Are we relying on him? Listen, I've been in Paris, I know Blum, the only thing that will impress is a pair of milky thighs — send him a muchacha from Triana and let us get on with the fighting!" They all laughed.

The republican orator became angry. He turned to me. "You see how undisciplined they are. Believe me, it is coming about, what I say. Your officers can stay. But they must be incorporated in the republican army. This is what is going to happen. Your own representatives in the government have agreed to it."

The libertarians amongst us were stunned. Garcia Oliver, Federica Montseny, had they agreed to this? We could not believe it. We sent for information to our Regional Committee. "None of our movement agrees with it. But it's for unity. They think it will impress the Russians. You know what a mania they have for authority. They will never trust a people without a disciplined Army, you know how they worship the State — they're Marxists, after all — but then, we have to rely on them for arms."

"I know," I said wearily. "We're allies now. Don't tell me. Am I expected to ask the boys to salute me?"

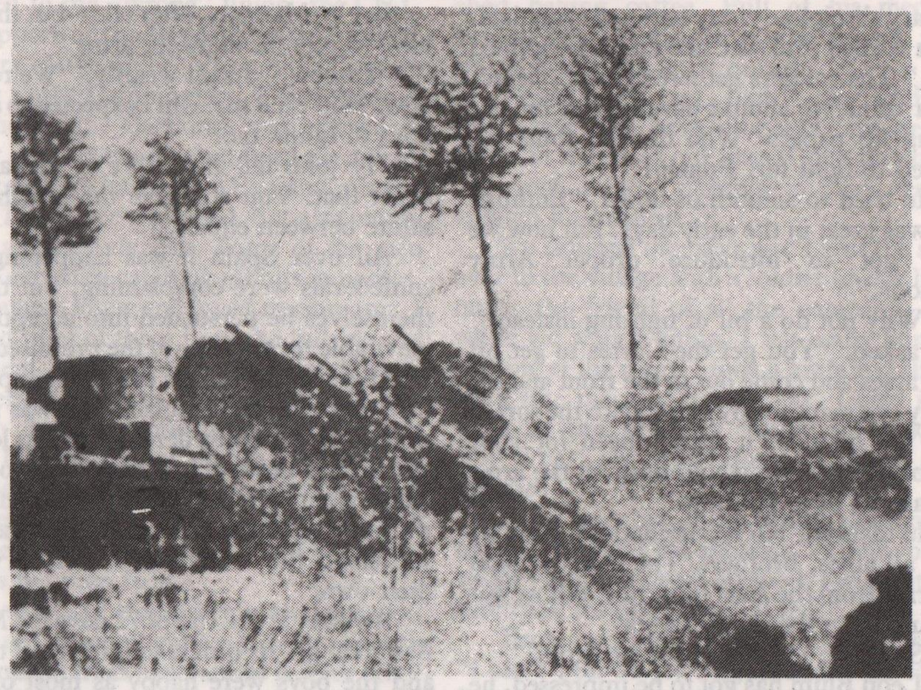
My joke fell flat. "We've managed to resist that. You still give the clenched fist salute between equals."

All over Spain it was happening. The confederals were complaining. But they let themselves be persuaded into accepting the inevitable for the sake of the promised arms. The republican leaders could not appreciate that whatever the regulations it was impossible to pass the murderous fire that led past our field, unless we had arms. The socialists made great speeches about the democratic world being behind us. If speeches had been sufficient, they could have won the war on their own.

Anyway at the end of 72 days the Madrid Battalion got its orders to pull out of the line and the boys were happy as most of them lived in the city and could, as they thought, go home. But as they were packing up their bags, news came through. Madrid was endangered by a new flying, armoured column which had pushed easily towards the city from the north east, and was heading for our positions. Dreams of a clean white sheet on the bed, a good meal, a girl, were over. We made back for our positions. With our orders came the news that we were now part of the Republican Army. We headed for the new attacking force as a "disciplined Army" — but in truth it was the same people, with the same inadequate supplies. Our enemy was a crack Italian division, the "Black Arrow" Division, headed by General Bergonzoli, a regular soldier known, I believe, to British troops in the Second World War as "General Gorgonzola").

So we marched, on our 'relief', some fifty miles through the cold and in drizzling, chilling, rain, to Guadalajara, in the hills. It is the last natural barrier before Madrid.

If Bergonzoli could crack our defence, from then on it was all level ground — ideal tank country. And what had he against him?



Italian tanks of the "Black Arrow" Division in action. A still from the film TO DIE IN MADRID.

Two "dinamiteros" throwing makeshift hand grenades.

There were no troops in reserve. Our commander had been forced to weaken the Madrid front to find what he had. He had taken out the Madrid Battalion, the Mangada Battalion, the 42 Brigade and General Lukas's 12th International Brigade, and the fresh young 65th Brigade from Tarragona.

Fortunately the Italians had pushed so far so fast they were at the end of their drive. They had to reorganise, refuel, rest. They stopped some while before Guadalajara.

Our positions were in the hills in front of the town. Stony country — impossible to dig up, the land divided into squares by the small stone walls the peasants had erected round their little bits of land. Our battalion extended in a single line in front of the little village of Briguhega. We were almost within shouting distance of the Italians who were manning their line some four hundred yards in front. But we had the stone walls to protect us. There they were — cold, hungry and wet — most of them eighteen year olds and myself, at 28, the 'father' figure. But none of them were depressed. They were eager to get started. Still we had no heavy guns, nothing behind us, no reserves. I wondered if Bergonzoli knew that the troops facing him at that moment were exactly one deep.

As I spoke French and Italian, I acted as liaison officer with the 12th International Brigade which was on our left. I got to know their commander, Gen. Lukas, well. He was a good soldier, but a sympathetic personality quite unlike any other professional soldier I had come across in France or Spain.

The nearest group to us was the Dombrowski Battalion, commanded by a huge Pole, always laughing and never happier than when some cognac came up. I could not drink before battle, but I was grateful for it afterwards.

Soon we had stabilised our line, and Lukas — who was later killed on the Aragon front near Saragossa — took over a castle as his headquarters. My Polish friend had a tent — it was a rare luxury there, for there was no cover in the line. One stayed behind the stone wall, cold and wet. It was a treat to visit him.

The communists in the International Brigade could not understand why we had objected to the Army being militarised. "What, do you want to get up and walk home whenever you feel like it?"

I protested at this simplification. "When my mother was ill the other month, and might have died, I went home to Barcelona and took her to her native town for the thermal baths, where she recovered," I said. "What, should I have left her to die? Juan, here, took over from me. We arranged it between us. What should I have done?"

They explained patiently. One should have a welfare officer who would arrange it all. The communists had a series of welfare and propaganda officers. One should write out one's applications to them. "Yes, they'll have a grand time of it granting applications, refusing them!" I said. "Maybe they should take over a Ministry building to do what we can fix amongst ourselves, while we sit out here on the wet ground taking their instructions!"

The communists all chorussed in dismay. "Anarchists! Irresponsibles!" But for all their vaunted discipline, it was they who suffered the first casualty for sheer irresponsibility. A Czech from the Dombrowski Battalion got drunk and insisted on walking in front of the protecting wall. He was shot by the enemy. One of our lieutenants went over the wall to help him. He too was shot. Two others went over the wall to help the two wounded men, and they too were shot. Others wanted to go over to help the four who were lying there bleeding terribly and calling to us. But I had to restrain them. Otherwise we would have been decimated. When it was dusk I took a few men over the wall and back to safety.

I complained bitterly to the Commandant of the Dombrowki battalion. "We lost three men because one of your chaps got drunk! Don't talk to me about discipline!"

At last we got reinforcements: the 65th

Carabineros. It was a newly formed Republican unit, mostly made up of Customs men — not a well trained body, but at least it was something.

Now we could go forward and attack. The Italians had made Briguhega their H.Q. The morning of the attack the entire republican aircraft bombed the Italian lines. We had draped our lines in white cloths and sheets that we found from raiding the deserted farms and cottages along the walls which formed our breastworks. That way the extent of our lines could be known from the air. There was a great dogfight up in the sky, and in the afternoon we went forward with a great rush. With the sound of the whistle, we clambered over the stone wall and rushed to the right of Briguhega. Every so often we dropped again behind those little stone walls. All round I saw people drop as they climbed over the walls. It was impossible to tell if they had been hit or not. One of my chaps, an eighteen year old student, fell. I thought he was malingering. He had a shot through the hand, and stood up and said, "I'm no coward, I advance." I felt ashamed and persuaded him to go back.

To our left I saw the I.B. driving down the main road to Guadalajara and by-passing Briguhega, making steady speed, until we lost sight of each other. I was the first to enter Briguhega. I went in by the south west gate, my company close behind me. Once inside the town we began to fight street by street. This type of fighting is the deadliest of all war games but at least ones in which armed civilians stand up to regular troops if they have the spirit. We shot Italian soldiers, we shot at Fascist civilians who opened fire from roofs and doorways. Suddenly the enemy began to surrender. Their morale cracked and they began to run. One lieutenant came up to me with 33 men, all with their hands up. We hardly knew what to do with so many prisoners.

I went to the Town Hall, where I found a group of wounded Italians — seventeen of them. Some may have been uninjured, but they decided that to throw their guns away and say they were wounded was the easiest way to keep alive.

At first they were worried as their officers had told them we took no prisoners. I reassured them. Some of them, trying to ingratiate themselves, said they had no idea when they left Italy they were going to fight against 'fellow Latins'. They thought they were going to Addis Ababa to fight the Ethiopians. "That's better, you think?" I asked drily. In reality, all the Italian troops in Spain — there were about 200,000 of them, I believe, — were volunteers and most of them were fascists, at any rate to begin with. Perhaps some of them had their eyes opened by what they saw.

One of them injured in the leg, was looking out of the window of the Town Hall towards the small stream that wound round the township. "Look, the General's car," he said. In his haste, General Bergonzoli had left it behind. That is how near we were to capturing him. If he had been captured then I think the British troops would have been spared General "Gorgonzola".

It was evening, and nearly dark. My men were tired out to exhaustion. I posted sentries, commandeered the abandoned barracks of the Guardia Civil and sent the men in to sleep. They slept like dead men. At that time they could take no interest in the girls who had flocked into the town square to cheer them, nor in the wine and food. All they wanted was sleep.

I had still much to do myself. I went to the jail and ordered the warder to release the prisoners. This was something I had done in Barcelona and in Caspe. The men inside were afraid to come out. They could not believe that the Italians had been driven away and thought the Fascists simply wanted to apply the notorious 'ley de fuga' of Spain — "shot while trying to escape". One old man shook his fist at me defiantly, thinking I was a Fascist. "Assassin" he shouted. He took out his union card, waved it, and spat at me. "Long live the Confederation!" he cried in what he thought was his last moment. I took out my CNT card too

Guadalajara 1937 — Italian prisoners of war.

and waved it. "Get these men out or I'll denounce you as a blackleg!" They all laughed and cheered, highly relieved. No fascist would have joked in that way, even in deceit. Afterwards I felt sick at realising the mistake arose when they heard me announced as "Lieutenant".

The warder's daughter was very helpful. She was perhaps doing her best to see that her father did not suffer now that the situation had changed. She told me where to find the best house in town for the Battalion Commander. "Yes, this is essential," I agreed drily. "We're a disciplined army now!" She also found me a lovely house in the town square which had been abandoned. There I slept. While we slept the Italians were steadily retreating. If only we could have kept on the go we could have demolished that armoured division of some 15,000 crack troops. They were defeated and demoralised, and had we fresh troops to take our place we should have gone after them and wiped them out. But we were no supermen. It was two or three days since we had slept. We had been out in the damp for weeks. We had not seen a bed for two or three months. Only now were we able to have a good meal.

Next morning, before pushing on, we collected rabbits and potatoes. What delicacies! I had my meal cooked downstairs and with some of my friends dined upstairs in the third storey dining room of the house, when a bomb fell. It split the house in two. Our half stayed intact, the other half collapsed killing many people. We escaped by clearing the jammed door of rubble and walking down the debris on the injured part. This was a frequent occurrence in Madrid. Here, we were even nearer to the enemy. After this bombing attack, the battalion commander ordered us all out of the town and we moved to the empty hillside, from which we began our advance again. It is impossible to describe the sense of elation we had, all young men, chasing a powerful enemy, with a few rifles of our own and a couple of machine guns we picked up from the enemy. We felt

ourselves invincible. And I was pleased beyond belief. For in capturing that town I had only lost one man — the boy who was shot through the hand.

But I knew that sort of luck could not last. It was a great defensive victory and we were nearly across the main road from Madrid to Saragossa. If only we could have cut that road it would have been a major victory. For this reason Franco was calling up his best troops. We tried to advance but it was an impossibility. We made our headquarters in the little cemetery of a village near the road. Again we took shelter behind the pebbly walls, but when we tried to advance the quick firing machine guns opposite took their toll. I was bereft when I saw them dying, all my young men who had fought so bravely in defence of Madrid and had driven out the pride of the Italian Army from Briguhega. The walls proved no protection against mortars. It was death to move without artillery. We fought as we could. When we tried to set up machine gun nests they were blown to pieces. Every time we were visited by the new officers from Madrid we implored them, "Arms, arms, we must have arms!"

We had given them their disciplined army, we had stayed at the front despite enormous provocations. We knew that the communists were forming units to break up collectivised farms and completely ignoring the fighting at the front; we knew the republic would not allow arms to the Aragon Front because it would have redounded to the credit of the libertarian movement; we knew that Catalonia was deliberately excluded from all that vast supply of food and medicaments that came in; and we knew that all this led to a bloody clash in Barcelona during May, when the Socialist-Communist alliance seized power.

We had put up with all this because their friends abroad were supposed to be sending us arms. Surely they could understand we would not win this war by defence? We saved Barcelona, we saved Madrid. But when the enemy conquered we could not drive him back. Not a dog could live among that withering mortar fire. All we could do was to stand firm, hold our positions and wait, while men were dying around us, waiting for that happy day when Russia would sell us so many arms that the Republic could spare guns from police duties and give them to those who were defending its very existence.

But as time went by and more and more men fell before the fire of the enemy, as week after week we obeyed fresh orders to advance and fell back before that withering hell, we lost hope. We knew by the second December of the war that we could never win it. The most we could hope for was to hold our positions. We could not surrender. The enemy was too vicious. In the earliest days those survivors from Saragossa, who had struggled out into Caspe, had described how, as they were taken, dozens of them, out of prison into the waiting lorries, a priest had held up a crucifix. "Kiss it, kiss it," he implored them. "God is above, he will absolve you of sin, kiss the crucifix." The Falangists had moved him away. "Don't worry, father, it is only for questioning." Then they had taken their prisoners along the road and shot them through the head. A few had shammed dead and escaped. This was repeated again and again.

The Moors had retaken Seville after these centuries. They had swept through like a massacring horde of barbarian troops. Everywhere that Franco won the townspeople, the soldiers, were lined up against the wall and shot. People asked themselves wonderingly, "How if he wins this war will he ever run this country again? Who will be left to work? The friars?"

But men cannot live without hope and in 1938 a new wave of optimism began to surge through that part of Spain still not occupied by the invader. It was plain to everyone that Hitler meant war. He intended to go to war with Russia and the democracies. What he had done to us in Spain, he would do to them, Mussolini would be his ally and Franco his puppet. "In that case it's all up with Franco!" everyone said hopefully. The

British Navy would prevent Italian support coming in, the French Army would harass Franco's troops from the North, Russia would bomb Franco out of existence... America, too? Probably. Look how bravely Roosevelt spoke! There were no end of allies the Spaniards acquired in their dreams! All we needed to do was to hold out. Privately, even the government told us "Hold out just a few months longer, Hitler will cross the Rhine, and then it's curtains for Franco!"

A few months longer? I spent 32 months in the trenches. We fought, we went on fighting, summer turned to winter and winter to summer again. All that brave brigade of youth that had set out with such high hopes were reduced to a handful, and still we kept on. It did not get any older, for apart from a few of us, we kept recruiting eighteen year olds. Always first year students, who never would complete the studies. They came out to the famous Madrid Battalion, but they did not go back. We held Madrid long after the government itself fled from the city to Valencia. It was a bitter joke among the anarchists — they said "at last we have a chance of victory, long live Madrid without a government!" But we really no longer expected victory. All we were trying to do was defend, defend, defend... drag out until the world war started and Hitler would drag Franco under with him.

There was no alternative but tyranny and death. That alternative we got.

1939 — French police confront Catalan refugees at the Le Perthus entry point into France.

TAILPIECE TO PART ONE

When the war ended, Miguel Garcia went into hiding like everyone else who stayed behind. He was found, however, and taken by the fascist forces to a concentration camp in Madrid where he met other comrades who agreed to form the Resistance movement when they came out. He spent 2½ years in what was ironically called the Unamuno concentration camp.

Then — coming once more into a Spain neutral during a world war (though this time with a heavy bias to the German forces) — came the period of the resistance. Members of the CNT began the first Maquis in resistance to the Vichy regime and Hitler. Within Spain, an organisation sprang up that made an active and determined resistance, after the civil war ended in 1939, that lasted until 1949, when the "gangs" were rounded up except for a few who survived to fight on, such as "Quico" Sabater.

In 1949 Miguel was condemned to death, but this was commuted to 30 years, which later political "concessions" reduced to twenty. He left prison in 1969, and at the invitation of Stuart Christie, whom he had met in prison, came to England. From 1969 to 1981 he waged a strong campaign internationally; the tributes to him testify to the impression he made, and the action he inspired.

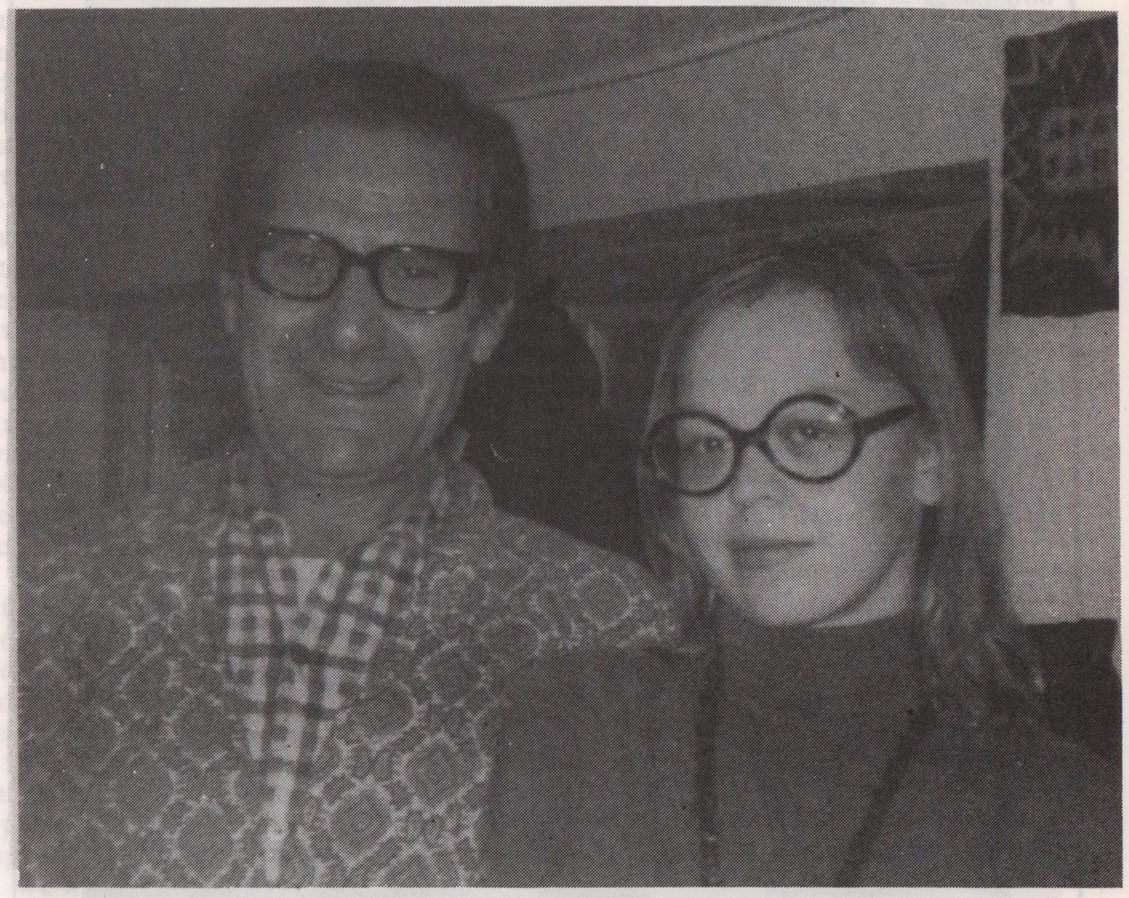
We wrote "Franco's Prsioner" together: he dictated in Spanish, I wrote it down in English, and we then went hammer-and-tongs for a week arguing and revising it. It is this later stage that is, alas, missing from the preparation of the autobiography here, which I had thought lost for ever. It originally made the opening pages of his book. But the publisher thought it would make the book too long, and it may be he was right. I urged Miguel several times to expand on it and make it into a second book. He would not do so — partly, I suspect, because he did not want to expand on his private life. He would speak of his parents, but never discussed his married life. He does give some hint in "Franco's Prisoner" of his great love who died in the Argentine; of Lina, who came to console him when he left prison; of the fact that he had married in Madrid, and that his wife was a nurse; that he had relatives. But he said nothing about this even to his closest friends, and even put people off the scent by inventing relatives for *them*. We're all entitled to our quirks.

Fortunately, this piece has survived; in my view, it is one of the most graphic accounts of the Civil War even though it does not deal with the most exciting aspects of that war, the collectivisation of industry by the workers. Miguel explained that he spent the whole war — after the first few months — in that Godforsaken field outside Madrid, and that others were better qualified to tell of the success of the experiences of self-management.

Marseille, 1941. RAUL CARBALLEIRA (1918-48), Argentine-born, one of the most determined fighters of the Spanish Resistance of 1939-49.

The last of the Resistance? Francisco Sabater Llopart (Sabate) lies dead in San Celoni.

PART TWO:
PERSONAL APPRECIATIONS



Miguel with a close friend & comrade from Denmark with whom he worked in a Finsbury Park old peoples' home. Centro Iberico, Autumn 1975.

I first met Miguel in 1973. He was then 67 but could easily have been mistaken for a man in his late 40's. Squarely-built, a shock of thick black hair brushed straight back from his forehead, bespectacled, and dressed casually in check work shirt and corduroy trousers, he was anything but the popular image of a Spanish Anarchist. I had expected him to be an old man, bowed down by his twenty years in Franco's prisons. Not a bit of it. Instead, he seemed to have been actually preserved by his years inside; held in suspended animation whilst he stored up energy and ideas for action. He had not witnessed the years of defeat and internal squabbling which had taken the life out of the Spanish Libertarian Movement in exile. He had gone into prison fighting, and that was the way he had come out.

Miguel's comrades in arms, who had fought in the civil war and had gone on fighting in the "peace" — refusing to recognise defeat — no longer functioned in any organised way by the time he was released in

1969. Most were dead, still in prison, or in exile. But a new generation had sprung up whilst Miguel was inside to carry on the work of the libertarian Resistance. As soon as he was released, Miguel, plunged straight back into the struggle again, as International Secretary of the newly-reformed Anarchist Black Cross. Bringing practical aid to libertarian prisoners all over the world, and making solidarity an effective springboard to militant action, the aim of the Black Cross was to build a revolutionary anarchist International; not on paper, but out of deeds. This was instrumental in restructuring the Resistance and (through the FOI) keeping alive the libertarian traditions in the Spanish workers' movement that led to the re-emergence of the CNT. As a result of helping the anarchist fighters in Spain such activity activated anarchist movements in many other parts of the world, including Britain, France, Belgium, and West Germany. Miguel's part in all this was immeasureable.

My introduction to the revolutionary anarchist movement was through the campaign of solidarity with the resistance groups of the MIL, and in particular the attempts to save one of their members, Salvador Puig-Antich, from the garrot. Puig-Antich was put to death with his mediaeval instrument at 4am, on 2nd March 1974. Miguel had met the young Catalan anarchist and liked him. But typically his concern was for the living, for continuing the struggle.

Throughout this period, Miguel ran the International Liberation Centre/Centro Iberico at Haverstock Hill, North London. It was from there that BLACK FLAG (which Miguel had run with Albert Meltzer when its editor, Stuart Christie, was in prison during the 'Angry Brigade' trials) was printed and published. There, also, comrades from Spain and around the world, learned the mysteries of off-set litho printing, and found the practical assistance and friendship which made the Black Cross aim of an international into a living reality. Visiting comrades could always be sure of a welcome, food, a bed for the night, or a place to squat when Miguel was there. To the casual observer, he was sometimes over-critical and prickly, but all who knew him for any length of time soon discovered his warm and generous heart. From the Centro were organised a string of successful benefit concerts in aid of libertarian prisoners and the Spanish Resistance, as well as countless solidarity campaigns and defence groups. The Murray Defence Group in London, which succeeded through a campaign of international solidarity in forcing the release of Ronan Stenson, and getting the death penalties handed out to Noel and Marie Murray in Dublin (June 1976) communted to life imprisonment, owed its existence and much of its subsequent success to the energy and determination of Miguel.

Whether helping to publish BLACK FLAG, speaking at meetings around the country, organising the printing and distribution of clandestine anarchist literature inside Spain, or any of the many and varied forms of activity he undertook, Miguel could always be relied upon to inject an air of commons-sense, strength, and practicality into the proceedings. He could be grumpy, and was never one to suffer fools gladly (often seeming harsh in his judgements of people), but he was always fair in his dealings with everyone he encountered. He always allowed them the benefit of the doubt, giving them the chance to prove their real worth by their actions. Miguel always maintained the highest degree of integrity and sincerity in everything he did. He always remained faithful to his idea of revolutionary struggle, and never ceased caring or fighting. Whenever things were bad, and no matter how bad they got, his answer was always the same: "We must DO something." Action was always his prime concern, words always came a poor second place. He never lost that most important quality of a true revolutionary: the instinctive urge to rebel against injustice.

He loved to be surrounded by friends and comrades (though he always insisted on

having some time alone with his thoughts each day), and regale them with a rich fund of stories and reminiscences about the old Resistance. But he never ever boasted or tied to squeeze any personal glory from his own exploits. He possessed a quiet, unassuming, dignity. FRANCO'S PRISONER, his autobiography (published in 1972), was written with the same consideration that underlay everything he did in life: to stimulate others to action. The pen for Miguel was just another weapon with which to fight. His contribution to the work of the Spanish Resistance and the international anarchist movement was far greater than he would ever choose to admit openly. His modesty was a combination of natural unobtrusiveness and a practical regard for the rules of consppiracy. Pride and vanity were very different things for Miguel.

His comrades in the Black Cross repeatedly tried to persuade him to write a sequel to FRANCO'S PRISONER, setting down more about events of which he was probably the sole-survivor. The idea appealed to him, but he was always too busy doing "more important" things in the present to bother much about recording the past. In his foreward to FRANCO'S PRISONER, Miguel wrote:

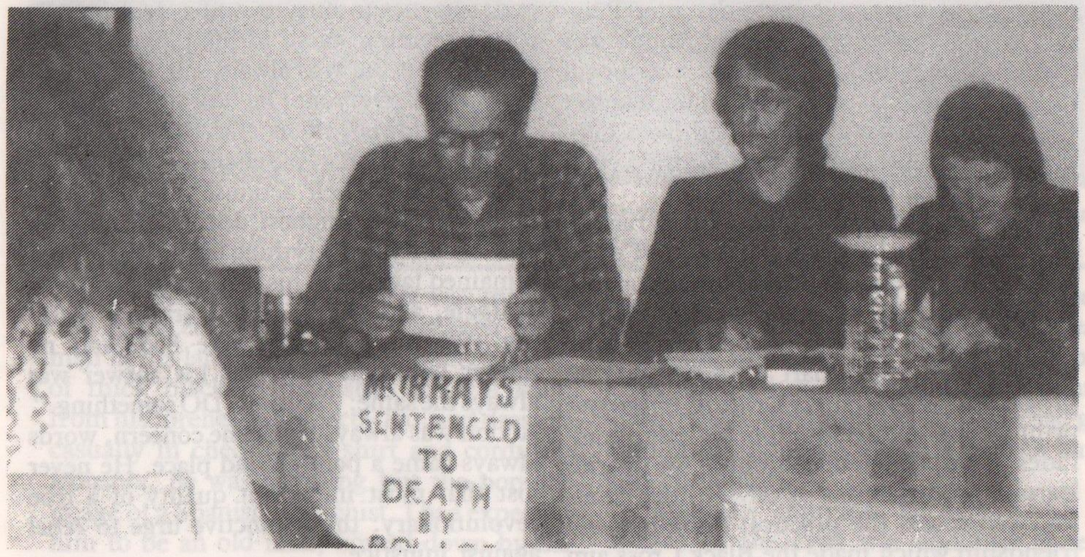
> "When we lost the war, those who fought on became the Resistance. But to the world, the Resistance had become criminals, for Franco had made the laws... When we are imprisoned, liberals are not interested, for we are 'terrorists'. They will defend the prisoners of conscience, for they are innocent; they have suffered from tyranny, but not resisted it. I was among the guilty. I fought, I fell, I survived. The last is the more unusual."

Miguel was a survivor, who never gave up fighting. In the last three years he had gone back to Spain, opened a cafe, and become immersed in the struggle in his old territory once again.

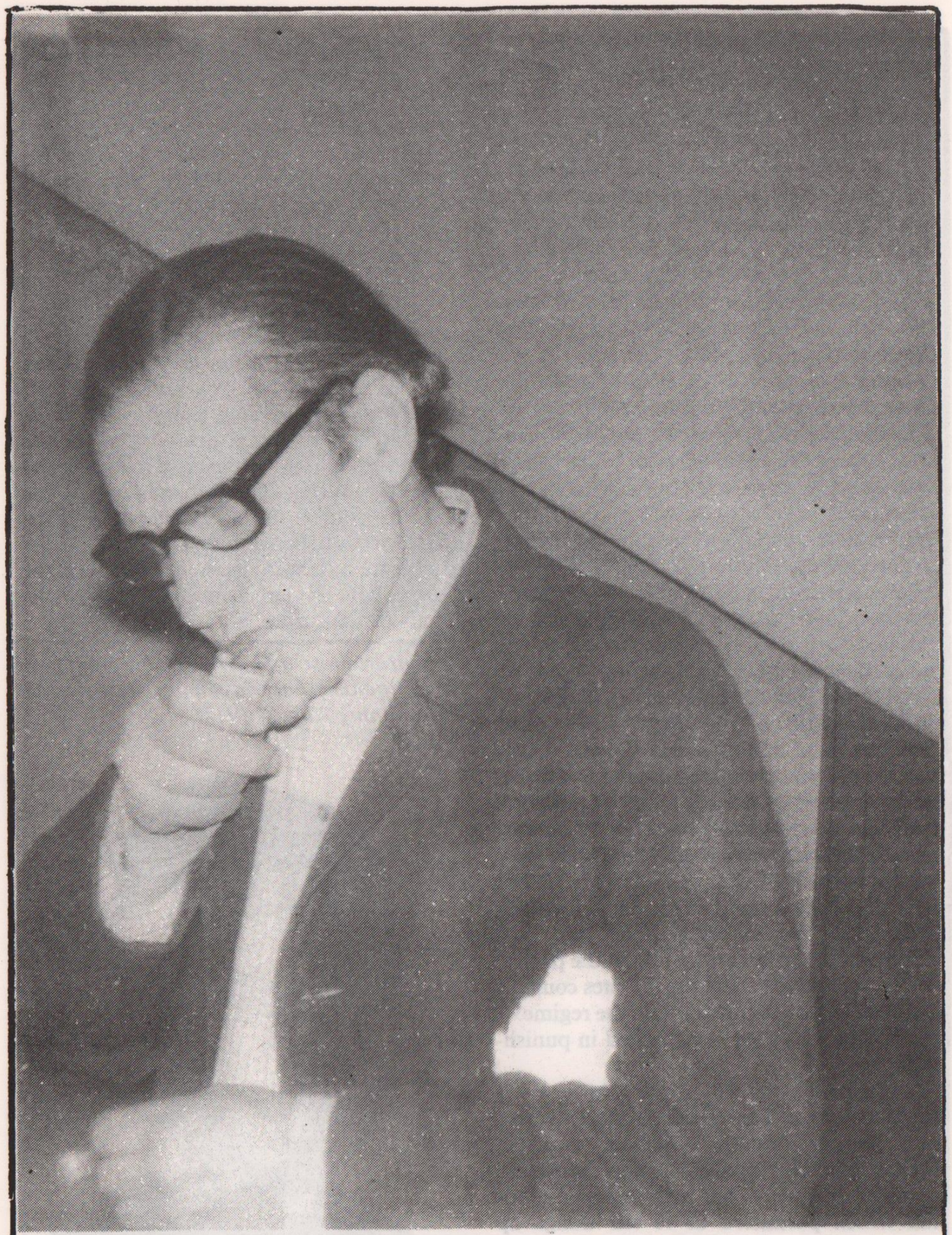
On the last occasion I saw him in London, in June this year, he was still full of plans for the future. Though more tired, lonely, and feeling his age (exasperated by ill-health which he tried to ignore) than ever I saw him in the past, his sole concern was the same as ever: "We must DO something!"

It is with people like Miguel that we will build a free society. I have lost a very dear friend and comrade. I miss him badly.

Phil Ruff



London Murray Defence Group public meeting, 1977. Miguel with Phil Ruff and Charlotte Baggins.



Miguel at an Anarchist Black Cross concert in aid of the disabled & war-wounded of the Spanish Civil War now in exile: the "Forgotten Veterans", 3 April, 1976.

From Goliardo Fiaschi, Carrara (Italy)
(trans. by Giles)

In Franco's Prisoner *Miguel Garcia relates how he was in prison with Goliardo Fiaschi, an Italian Anarchist sentenced to twenty years for his association with Facerias, the noted Spanish Resistance fighter, and deported from Spain to Italy at the end of his sentence, when he went to prison (in post-war Italy) for a "crime" against the former fascist State. The Anarchist Black Cross launched a campaign for his release.*

A great comrade has left us before his time. Only we who have spend a lifetime in prison know what it means to be a comrade in every way, struggling against a reactionary enemy who seeks to crush you. The comrades who left prison alive without being crushed are comrades who have set an example amid the grim misery of the human race.

I knew him for 34 months in Franco's prisons, one month in Teruel in which we rarely saw each other because we were both in solitary, and then in Alicante.

I arrived in Alicante prison in January 1960 and Miguel arrived a fortnight later. The one good thing was the climate. As for the rest, it was a criminal system, with iron discipline and nauseating food. Miguel and I were the only political prisoners, recognised as such by the Franco regime, but there were many comrades. In one year, though, we two with another comrade whose name I will not give so as not to compromise him, had changed the repressive system in the prison. When we arrived there the inmates couldn't even criticise the injustices and the regime — for if they did, they were locked in punishment cells.

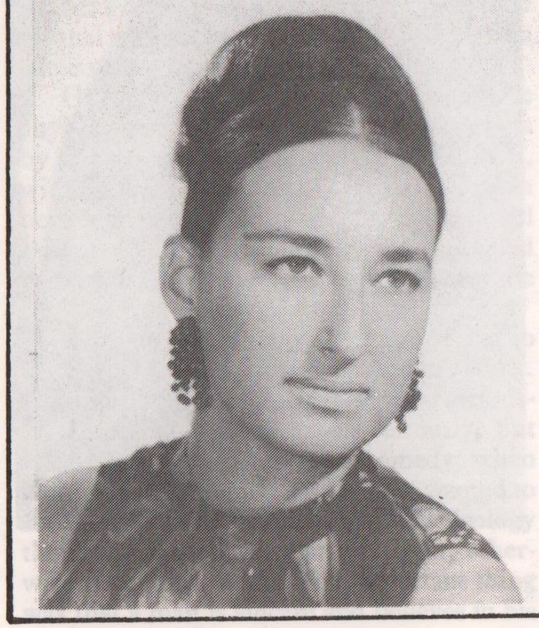
The prison was full of spies, but we — I in particular as a foreigner — used to criticise loudly both the injustices and the repression. We couldn't show ourselves completely openly, but a system was adopted which permitted us to stir things up amongst the warders, and that brought considerable benefit. The repression dimished and life began to get better and better. It was greatly satisfying to us even though the inmates at each improvement thought that the prison administration was becoming more generous.

Our jailers were the ones who since 1939 had murdered thousands of comrades in prison, and we wondered whether we would ever leave alive. We were amazed that "human beings" could be so bestial just for a wage.

At that time Miguel's very old mother came to Alicante staying at a comrade's house. Miguel was earning a pittance making baskets, and he used to give this to his mother who visited him every week. Every time after he returned from a visit he was very upset. He was a very good man who had great sensibility of human problems. When Anarchy comes, the new generations must be told what the anarchists endured in order to liberate humanity from injustice, and the name of Miguel Garcia must be written in the annals of the future.

Goliardo Fiaschi in Toulouse just before he accompanied Facerias on his last journey into Spain, August 1957.

Miguel's mother (far right). I am unable to identify the others. He had many nephews and nieces. So far as I know, he lost contact with his own wife and son after going to prison.



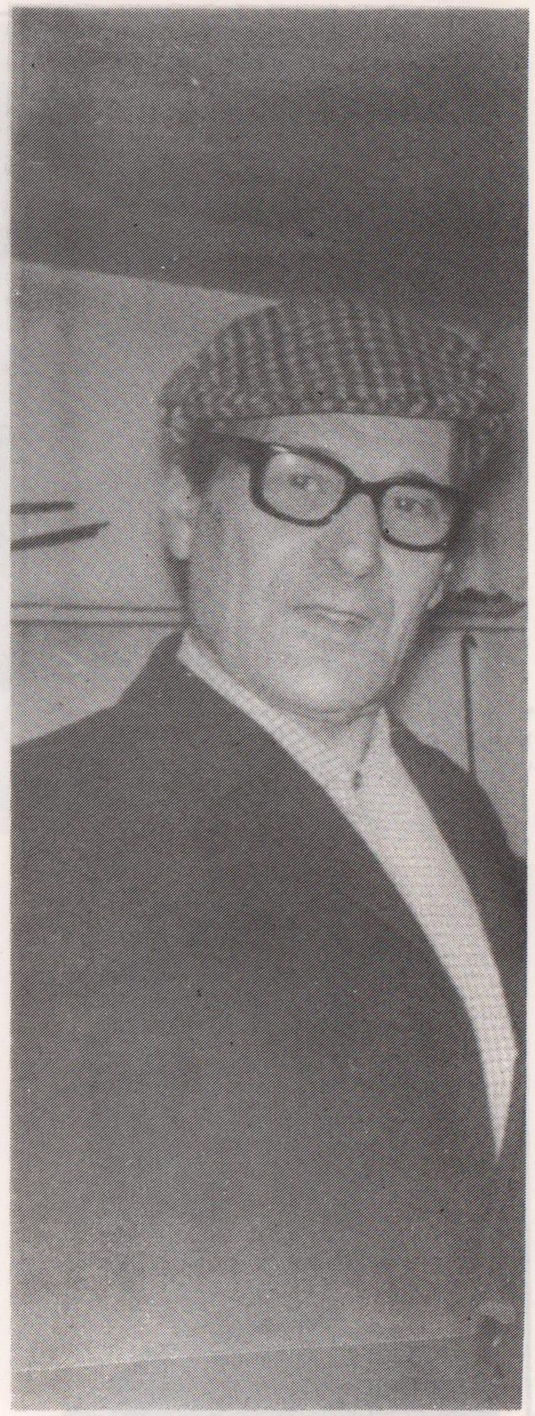
Miguel's niece, Sarita. Barcelona, 1969.

From: Stuart Christie, (Scotland), who served a term in Franco's jails for "terrorism and banditry", where he met Miguel Garcia.

Miguel Garcia has passed from among our ranks to become a living memory among those who knew and loved him. Chance brought us together in Madrid's Carabanchel Alto prison where he was entering his seventeenth year of incarceration and I was starting my third year. Miguel Garcia was one of the key people who played an important part in my early years, helping me to come to terms with prison as a place of struggle and, more importantly, with myself. On his release, after twenty years behind the bars of Franco's prisons, Miguel came to live with Brenda and myself in London. When others would have been content to take a back seat in the struggle after sacrificing so much, Miguel took up the battle where he left off in 1949, a battle he was to continue to wage until the moment of his passing in a North London hosital in December 1981.

It is difficult to come to terms with the harsh reality that Miguel is no longer with us, either in his (almost) historical flat in Upper Tollington Park, London, a place which became his lifeline when the going got tough in Spain after his return there following Franco's death, or at his bar La Fragua in Barcelona's Calle Cadena, a bar which became the meeting place of anarchists from every quarter of the globe. No longer will I be the butt of the incorrigible but fleeting short-tempered outbursts he directed against friends, fools and foes alike, or be reassured by his infectious and unmistakeable chuckle. Miguel had some faults, but he had many more qualities. The anarchist movement has lost a good comrade in Miguel Garcia, but his life is one more firm link in the chain which pulls us towards a better world.

Stuart Christie



Centro Iberico, 1976.

The first time I met Miguel was in June, 1975, in the Centro Ibérico which was then situated in Haverstock Hill, Camden Town. Miguel had made a paella and told me that we Germans always took everything seriously. I agreed, because I suddenly realised that he was right: we do take everything seriously.

So my first memory of Miguel is that I just had to agree with him because he was right. I had the same impression again and again over the six years I knew him. There were others in the Centro who had been fighting in the Spanish Civil War and the Resistance and who had been suffering in prison, like Miguel. Although I was full of admiration for what he had suffered and what I had read in his book, I felt attracted to him not because of his past, but because of his presence, the full force of reality that was in him and with which he was talking to me.

It was impossible to be absent-minded in his presence; he actually wouldn't allow it. He wanted to be understood. So I used to go to the Centro to have a paella or a fried rice he had prepared ("prison food", as he used to call it) and to listen to him. In this short article I just want to render some of the remarks he made in order to give a picture of Miguel as he appeared to me and to pass on some of his principles.

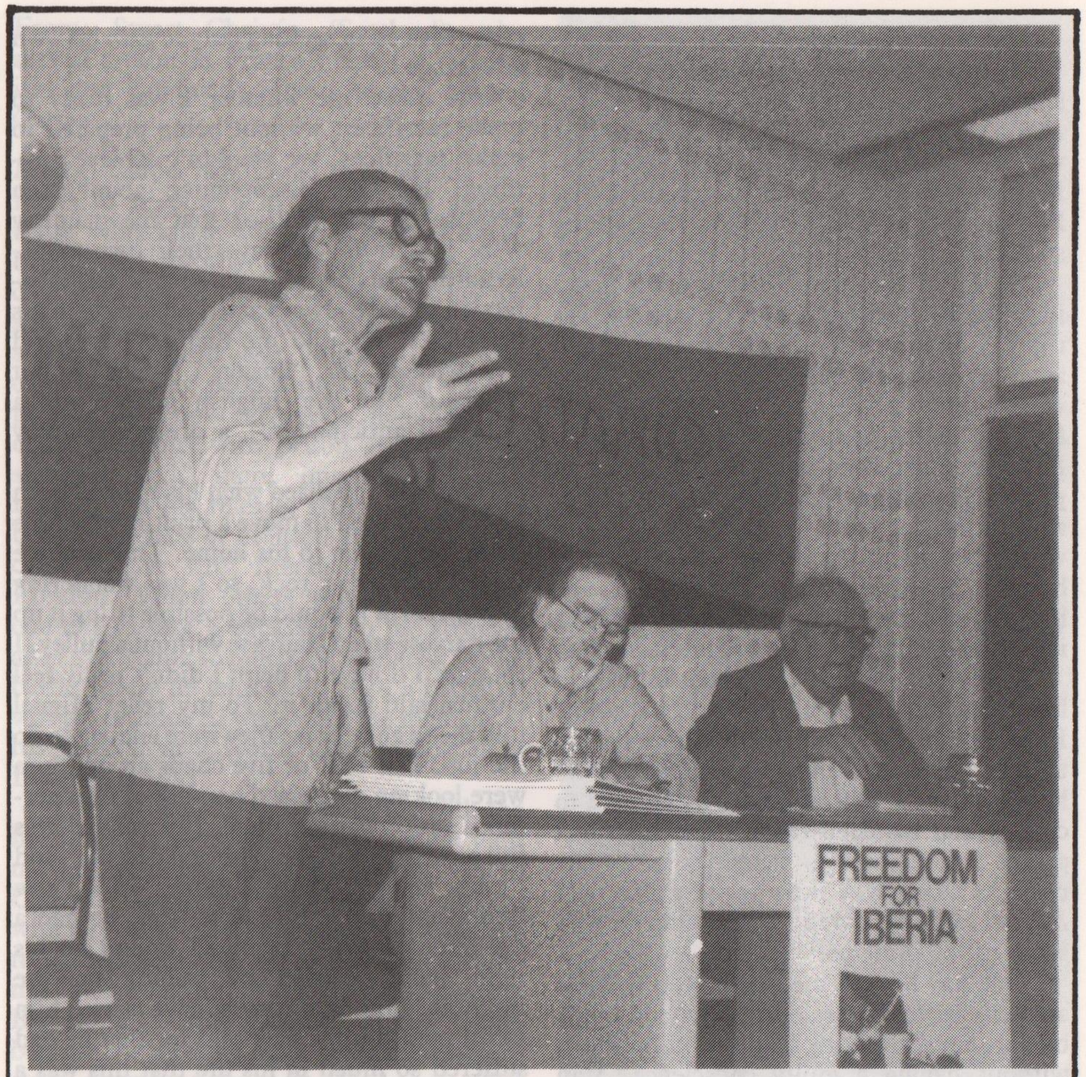
One day he told me that he couldn't see anybody suffer. He said a man couldn't pass by another man, lying helpless on the road, without having a guilty conscience. Man needed to help his fellowmen — here Miguel hesitated, thinking of the right word, and then said with a smile, in English: "...for the soul."

Sometimes I argued with him, trying to prove that his political ideas wouldn't work. He said that I was taking things too seriously. Life shouldn't be taken seriously, but rather like a theatre play, a comedy; when I'd be old, I'd understand what he wanted to say by that. In his opinion, in every ideology there was something that was right, otherwise it couldn't work. The important thing was that a man is sincere and believes in his cause instead of seeking only to gain his own advantage.

He asked me whether I was ready to make sacrifices; without being prepared to make sacrifices, we wouldn't achieve anything. He was disappointed about men because he had realised that the majority were just trying to save their own skins. Regarding his own life, he said he felt satisfaction to have always acted according to his principles. He told me that nobody could live without an "ilusión", which is not "illusion" in the English sense, but a "hopeful anticipation", a dream that may become true.

One day I realised what his life had been like. He wanted to move a printing machine from the Centro to his home. The machine was as heavy as a rock, so I was wondering how on earth it would be possible to lug it up the narrow steep staircase without a pulley. I thought I'd have to help; I didn't really feel enthusiastic about it. To my relief Miguel told me to go because they were enough to do the job. The four or five chaps around him were looking depressed because of the enormous task awaiting them. But Miguel was full of will-power, strength and decision, and I knew he would have it move. When I saw him again a couple of days later, he had a dangerous looking lacerated wound on his right hand, caused by pulling up the machine. I thought it must have caused him awful pain, but Miguel told me that he had suffered so much in his life that this was a matter of no importance.

In 1976 I lived in Edinburgh where Miguel came together with his friend and comrade Albert Meltzer to give a speech at the university. He was talking about his life and about anarchism, both being in fact one and the same thing on which, as he said, he had to speak and to write, "because I need it." I realised what a good speaker he was, capturing his audience by speaking from his heart to their hearts, not about abstract theories, but about concepts derived from his own life and sufferings. Therefore his concepts were true; I believe the people were



London School of Economics, 8 May 1976. Miguel speaking at the 'teach-in' which concluded a successful speaking tour of England on "The Libertarian Alternatives In Spain & Portugal Today", organised by the Libertarian Iberia Committee. With him are Philip Sansom and Albert Meltzer.

Miguel at home, posing with an old comrade of the CNT, April 1979.

getting the feeling that this man Miguel Garcia was himself true. In this way he told or rather, he taught his audience: "Be free yourselves before pretending to fight for the freedom of others", and secondly: "Don't give the power to nobody". These are the two points he mentioned in his speech as being the most important.

He told me that he didn't like the word "enemy". The only enemy he accepted was the majority: If the majority outvoted him, he had to put up with it. If their decision was wrong, all would have to suffer the consequences of it and revise the decision. The important thing was that they would have to suffer the consequences of their action themselves. A ruling minority like the communists, Miguel said, wouldn't themselves suffer the consequences of the mistakes they made. They'd perhaps correct their mistakes, but they'd not admit to having been mistaken in order not to lose their authority.

Later in 1976 I stayed three weeks at his home in Finsbury Park, a simple basement flat he said he didn't want to exchange for a palace because it suited him so well. He was a bit ill, so at one time I suggested to him to stay in bed one more day in order to recover completely. He refused and said in his usual vehement way that he knew best himself what was good for him. I argued that he didn't seem to have known this when on a previous occasion he went to a meeting in Cambridge inspite of being very ill. He admitted that then he had felt so bad that he believed that was the end. However, he had wanted to go to Cambridge because it was an important meeting; his reason was that one must give one's life for the sake of life, "dar la vida por la vida." There I heard him say this for the first time; he said it some more times later on when he was fighting for "La

Fragua" in Barcelona and I told him to mind his health.

Miguel's insistent way of talking to people and the effect this caused on his interlocutor has best been described by Hans-Dieter Hambrecht who lived with him for half a year in 1978 and who wrote to me: "As you know, Miguel sometimes starts speaking with you, talking to you. I went out with him today, and again it was excellent, these two hours of brainwashing have once again convinced me of him completely. I'm back on the right track, I know again what's good and what's bad... But the crucial point isn't to what extent Miguel is right in an 'objective' way; it's rather his way of explaining things with a persuasive power that just doesn't admit contradiction. I'd like to go further, it's a sort of bodily well-being that befalls me when I'm drawn in this way to assenting to him. Everything appears to be agreeable, clear and right."

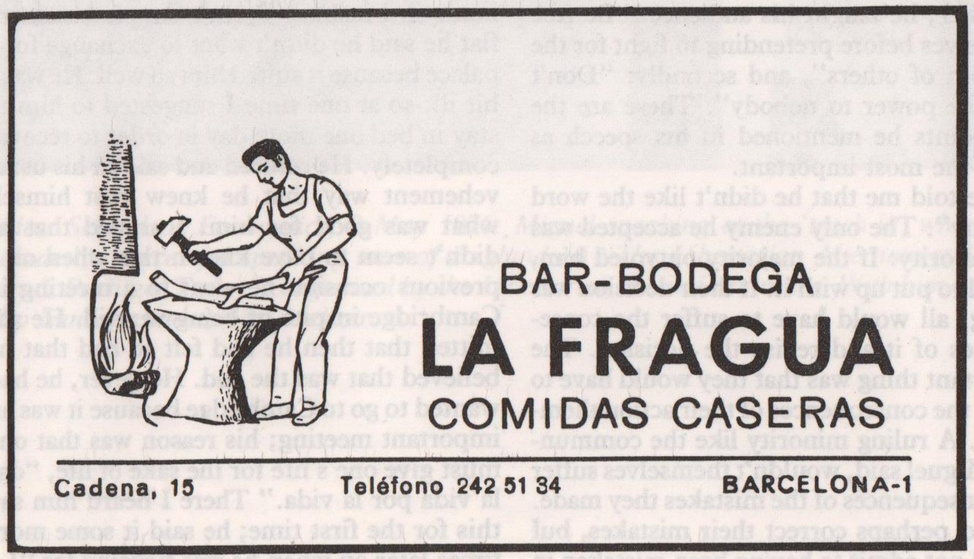
When I saw Miguel for the last time in September, 1981, in Barcelona, we agreed that he would come and visit me in Hamburg the next year. Three months later he was dead. Although I knew that he was 73 years old, that he didn't mind his health and that his principle was "dar la vida por la vida", it had never occurred to me that he could die. He was so much alive. When I heard the news of his death, I felt the same as Albert who told me on the phone: "I couldn't believe it."

This man Miguel was free. He was true. He was a fighter. He was kind-hearted. He was my best friend. He was alive. His life was full of sufferings that now have come to an end. He has died as everybody must die, but he himself gave his death its meaning: he gave his life for the sake of life. That's how he led his life up to the end; that was his "ilusión". He was right.

So in a way I still can't believe that he's dead. I believe that there's something of Miguel, of his truth, that lives wherever people are suffering, wherever men are helping their fellowmen, wherever they want to be free. Miguel, my friend, I'll be alive to you forever. This extraordinary great man Miguel Garcia will never be forgotten.

Gerfried Horst, Hamburg, W. Germany

Calling card of Miguel's bar in Barcelona.



From Mike Goodman, IWW General Defence Committee, Local 5. Sydney (Australia)

I knew Miguel for some 2½ years in London during '73-75. A warm old man, inseparable from his pyjama jacket which he always wore, he was possessed of great enthusiasm and almost boundless energy for every project that came along. This was the heyday of the International Centre in Haverstock Hill (which also housed the Centro Iberico) a time of many meetings and film nights and many long, lonely hours of just keeping the place open for any comrade who wanted to come by seeking news or information, or just a friendly chat. He was always there cooking up meals for comrades, advising about places to stay, finding bedding, furniture and even clothing for many people who wanted to squat houses, lending an ear to all manner of problems and doing what he could to help.

No small thing, this, when he'd already spent so much of his early life involved with the libertarian struggle in Spain, and then having to spend twenty years in Franco's jails for daring to believe that a free society should be more than just a dream.

An implacable faith in the anarchist ideal and a love of life — these were his strengths and ones we can all share in. As I left London at the end of '75 I remember him saying that we'd raise a glass or two in my return. Six years on and still on the other side of the world, I'd like now to raise that glass, Miguel — farewell old friend, you will indeed be missed...

From Colin Pollard, Newtown, N.S.W. (Australia)

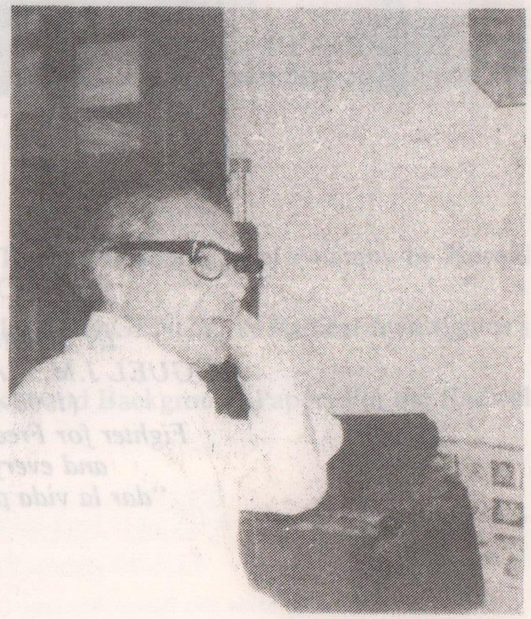
Apart from a brief correspondence after Miguel's release from prison about the possibility that he might spend some time recuperating in Australia and giving some inspiration to the anarchist movement in this far corner of the world, my first opportunity to meet him was in Paris in April '79, when Miguel accompanied by a group of friends from London, visited the AIT Conference en route to Barcelona with the popular pamphlet "Esperanto and the CNT" which I was able to assist in distribution, both on May 1st and subsequently around the locals and cafes of Barcelona.

In the period when I stayed in the Spartan flat in Barcelona which Miguel shared with CNT activists, I was introduced by him to countless friends of the anarchist movement — which proved a lifelong link, in my estimation, with the relentless vigour of the Hispanic anarchist movement. Through these people, many more possibilities presented.

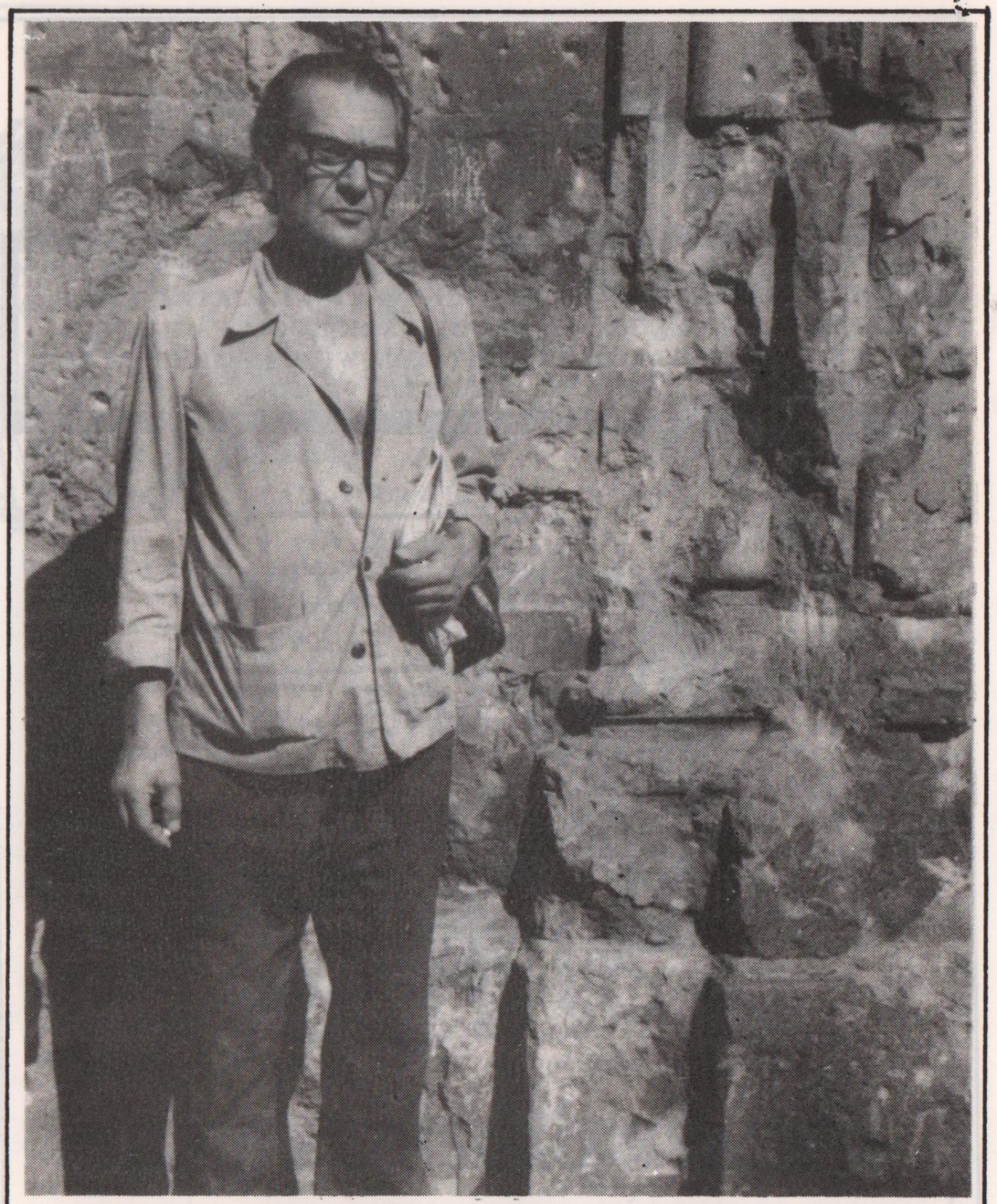
Again in London, Miguel continued his dynamic involvement and once again he shared many an active engagement and discussion of the various affairs of life from an activist anarchist vantage was once more a source of inspiration for me.

Miguel, in his living, was thorough and intense, with always a moment for the naive and innocent and the fragile — but the hypocrite, never!

Miguel in his "(almost) historic flat in Upper Tollington Park".



IN MEMORIAM
MIGUEL J.M. GARCIA GARCIA
(1908-1981).
Fighter for Freedom in Spain
and everywhere.
"dar la vida por la vida."



Miguel Garcia — in his beloved Barrio Gotico (Gothic Quarter) — at the Plaza San Felipe Neri, where many comrades were rounded up and shot in 1939, and where many were arrested in 1949. Barcelona 1979.