

SPANISH TESTAMENT

by

ARTHUR KOESTLER

With an Introduction by

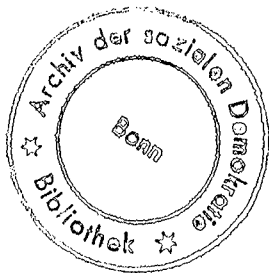
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TO
SIR PETER CHALMERS-MITCHELL



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INTRODUCTION

THIS IS A BOOK which illustrates better than any that I know the difficulty of getting at the facts in days of dictatorships and of war. For propaganda and press censorship are inseparable from both, and the strictness of the censorship on the insurgent side in Spain was revealed a year ago when the correspondent of two well-known British Conservative newspapers telegraphed that he was leaving the insurgent headquarters on account of the intolerable limitations that were being imposed on his work. Other correspondents of the "Right" have since experienced similar difficulties.

Mr. Koestler in his opening chapter makes clear the dangers to which French correspondents who had reported the massacre at Badajoz had been exposed and the recantations which they had been driven to make. His own hands happily were more free. As representative of a well-known newspaper of the "Left"—only a fortunate chance had enabled him to enter General Franco's territory, for journalists of the "Right" alone were being admitted. An equally unfortunate chance led to an early encounter with a former German colleague of the Ullstein Press in which he had held important posts before the advent of the Nazi régime in Germany. The encounter could not be agreeable to the insurgent authorities, and Mr. Koestler was no doubt well advised to end his visit to Seville.

But though the visit was a brief one the author, on account of the political orientation of his newspaper, could write freely without fear of prejudicing its chances of further permits. This fact explains the frankness of

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CHAPTER V

THE CHURCH MILITANT

I. THE REPUBLICANS AND THE CHURCH

THE SPANISH WRITER Larra has very neatly summed up the mentality of the Spanish clergy in his famous work, "*Nadie pase sin hablar con el portero.*" "*Recherches?*" asks the monk who has discovered a French book among the luggage of a traveller. "This fellow *Recherches* must certainly be a heretic. Into the fire with him!"

Reference has already been made in the introductory chapters to the singular development of the Catholic Church against the feudal social background of Spain. We have seen that in this socially backward country the development of the Church has also remained in a medieval stage. Whereas the confiscation of Church property was carried out in France in 1789 and to some extent in England under Henry VIII, and the separation of Church and State constitutes one of the features of the bourgeois era, in Spain the Church was, until the year 1936, one of the largest landowners in the country, and all demands for secular education were regarded until quite recently as treason and heresy. The temporal, material interests of the Spanish Church were as great as those of the French Church about the time of Richelieu, and those of the English Church up to the Reformation. We have further seen that the Spanish Church had such considerable sums invested in banking, industry, and even in large-scale commercial undertakings and shipping, that in order to safeguard these material interests it was obliged to meddle even in the petty intrigues of day-to-day political life.

The political attitude of the Spanish Church has been determined in no uncertain fashion by these secular interests; as a result the clergy in Spain has always pursued a strictly anti-liberal and anti-Republican policy, and has always championed the cause of absolute monarchy.

During the Great War the Spanish clergy was the chief exponent of pro-German propaganda, the object of which was to induce Spain to join the Central Powers.

In its espousal of the German cause the Spanish Church did not hesitate to employ the crudest methods of propaganda. France was represented as being a decadent nation, corrupted by "cocottes and anti-clericals"; England, the egoistic and perfidious Albion, as being the arch-enemy of Spain and of the Papacy. Germany, on the other hand, was a "chaste and healthy nation, which possessed an extraordinarily powerful army and fleet and whose friendship was likely to be in all circumstances of advantage to Spain, and to contribute to the welfare and the prosperity of the Catholic Church".

In this connection it is intriguing to note that all those groups who are to-day fighting on the side of the insurgents—the officers' cliques, the Carlists, the clergy, the conservatives—were, even as far back as 1914, passionately Germanophile, whereas those strata of the population which to-day constitute the People's Front, from the Trades Unions to the Basque and Catalan Catholics, were supporters of the allies. The social antithesis between the dictatorial régime of the Kaiser and the Western democracies had its counterpart even at that time in a similar rift within the Spanish nation.

The post-war policy of the Spanish clergy followed the same course. The clerical Press indulged in apologia for, and passionate eulogies of, Italian Fascism and German National-Socialism. The clergy and clerical Press in Spain enthusiastically acclaimed the Italian campaign in Abyssinia, and even went so far as publicly to pour contempt on England's attitude on the Abyssinian question.

The Spanish clerical Press systematically avoided all reference to the persecution of German priests and pastors by the Nazis, or to the charges of immorality brought against the German Franciscan orders, which are regarded even by anti-clericals as utterly base. In this respect again the one exception was "Euzkadi", the organ of the Basque Catholics, whose peculiar position, already mentioned, was reflected in their attitude to foreign politics.

The Spanish clergy's immediate reaction to the proclamation of the Spanish Republic in the year 1931 was of a most violent and aggressive character. The archbishops and priests turned themselves into electioneering agents, issuing pastoral letters against the Republican parties, the workers' organizations and their leaders, and not scrupling to employ the most unsavoury methods in their campaign against the Republic. On the occasion of the 1931, 1933 and 1936 elections to the Cortes, Spaniards were privileged to witness the curious spectacle of nuns being marched in a body to the polling stations to vote against the Republic.

It is quite understandable that the provocative attitude of the clergy should have aroused violent anti-clerical feeling amongst the people. Their attitude, as has already been said, was not anti-religious, but anti-clerical. There are large sections of the people who, while to this very day imbued with strong traditional religious feelings, are yet opposed to the attitude of the Spanish Church. The Church has increasingly cut itself off from the masses. The Church dignitaries' identification of themselves with the ruling caste, their open resentment of even the most elementary demands of the poor peasants, their cold and calculated policy of encouraging the wealthier peasants, has increasingly intensified this process of isolation. Not only those workers who have come under Socialist or Syndicalist influence, but the illiterate rural population too, have turned away from the Church.

The tension between clergy and people showed itself as open enmity when, during the first few years of the Republic, Gil Robles founded his *Acción Popular* and thus created the new form of Spanish clerical fascism. The Gil Robles party aimed literally and explicitly at the restoration of the Middle Ages; one of its leaders even declaring, on the occasion of a meeting in November, 1935, that the only means of putting an end to the prevalence of Godless Socialism in Spain was to set up a new Inquisition.

The young Republic itself, on the other hand, was far less militant. It never attempted to introduce, let alone enforce, a single reform that had not long since been embodied in the constitutions of many of the democracies of Europe; such as, for example, the separation of Church and State, the confiscation of Church property, the right of divorce, secular education in the State schools, the dissolution of the Jesuit order. The Republic respected the Concordat concluded in 1851 with the Holy See; it allowed all the religious orders, with the exception of the Jesuits, to continue to exist on Spanish soil; it allowed the Church schools for adults and children to continue to exist as private institutions, it permitted all the churches to remain open, and made no attempt to interfere with practising Catholics in the observance of their religion.

The Spanish clergy, nevertheless, was not amenable to reason or prepared to appreciate tolerance. During the rising in Asturias in October, 1934, certain fanatical priests went so far as to denounce Socialist workers to López Ochoa's hangmen, and amongst other things to conscript seminarists for the firing squads.

The cynical frankness of the document issued by the rebel Command, quoted in Chapter IV of this book, instructing officers to use church towers as strategic points during street fighting, may astound the foreigner; it was no

novelty to the Spaniard. Long before the outbreak of the insurrection it was known throughout the country that a number of fortress-like monasteries and churches in Spain were being mis-used by the *Falange Española* as depôts for arms and munitions, and that some priests even put these buildings at the disposal of the conspirators for their nocturnal meetings. As early as the elections of February, 1936, crowds were fired on from certain church towers. In Granada, during the victory celebrations of the People's Front, panic broke out when sharp-shooters fired on the crowd from house-tops and from a church tower in the centre of the town.

The reaction was inevitable. In the stormy months between February and the July insurrection, feeling ran high in a number of villages in Catalonia and Andalusia, and found expression in the burning of churches.

During the first few days of the insurrection churches were again used as strategic points. On July 19th, in Madrid, machine-guns were fired from the Salesian monastery in the Calle de Francisco Rodriguez (in the Cuatro Caminos district), from the Cathedral of Saint Isidor and from several priests' seminaries. After the fighting barricades of mattresses were found behind the windows of a convent in 7, Calle del Sacramento. Twenty-four hours before the insurrection the nuns had been evacuated, and a troop of Phalangists had taken up their quarters there. The same thing happened in other towns of Spain. In the smaller towns in Catalonia the inadequately armed or entirely unarmed Militiamen were frequently obliged to smoke out the machine-gun nests set up in the monasteries or to blast the walls with dynamite.

The results were what might have been expected. I have seen the ruins of churches and monasteries in Catalonia; the sight of them is staggering. I have also seen the churches in Madrid which were blown to bits by Franco's artillery and aircraft and the hospitals that suffered a like fate;

the sight was equally staggering. It is to be expected that the propagandists of both sides should make all the capital they can out of their demolished churches; in the Great War the Allies and the Central Powers also denounced each other for the destruction of church buildings. But that there should be journalists who never weary of returning again and again to the subject of the burned churches of Catalonia, expressing their horror at the effect, without mentioning the cause, is a thing I have never been able to understand.

In November, 1936, I had an opportunity of talking to Sergeant Fernando Ocier, of the Fifth Regiment of Militia, a former mechanic, at the Montana barracks. He described to me a scene which he had witnessed in Gerona on July 22nd.

"After the suppression of the insurrection," he said, "the romanesque church in a suburb of Gerona was guarded by a detachment of Workers' Militia. About twenty Militiamen had posted themselves some in front of the church door, others at the corners of the streets in the neighbourhood. Since things were already quiet in the district, the Militiamen were taking things fairly easily, and were smoking and chatting with passers-by. About seven o'clock in the evening a machine-gun began to rattle unexpectedly from the church tower. A Militiaman and two passers-by were wounded: chaos ensued, and no one knew what was actually happening. The Militiamen took cover and began to fire at random at the tower, but their Commandant ordered them to stop, and sent a messenger to headquarters to ask for instructions. He was loath to attack the church on his own responsibility, for it had been placed under his protection. At length orders arrived from his superior officer to storm the church. In the meantime uninterrupted machine-gun fire had been kept up; I think the people in the church must have had automatic quick-firing
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revolvers as well. A woman who was imprudent enough to go near was wounded in the head and died in the doorway of the house into which she was carried. A considerable crowd had gathered, which after this incident could scarcely be kept in check. When at last the Militiamen stormed the church, losing, incidentally, two men, the choir stalls burst into flames. In the course of the night the church was completely gutted. I don't know who set fire to it; the Militiamen arrested several suspects, but the feeling of the crowd easily explains the occurrence. I myself am a practising Catholic, and go to confession twice a month, but at that moment my sympathies were entirely with the crowd. When a man in a priest's robe shoots down a woman with a machine-gun for no reason at all, then he is no longer a priest.

"Later on it turned out that three scoundrelly Phalangists had been shooting from the tower; the Sacristan had fed them with ammunition. After the insurrection the Phalangists had hidden in the church and on the wireless set they had brought with them they had heard a rebel report that a fresh revolt had broken out in Barcelona. That is why they thought the moment had arrived to blaze away with their machine-gun. Two of the Phalangists were shot, the third is in the model prison, together with the Sacristan."

When civil war followed upon the insurrection, a number of priests in Spain developed a real crusading mania.

In Galicia the Bishop of Mondoñedo personally assumed the command of a rebel column which was sent to the relief of Oviedo before General Yagüe's column arrived on the scene. The Bishop of Mondoñedo was a prelate who had been notorious ever since the time of the Asturian rebellion, and his hostility towards the workers had led to grave conflicts within the ranks of the clergy itself. During the first few days of the Civil War the detachment that fought

under his command was composed entirely of priests and seminarists; a number of these bellicose priests were taken prisoner by Government troops.

The memorandum already referred to, drawn up by the Governing Body of the Madrid Faculty of Law, describes a positively fantastic scene in Pamplona, which shows how the darkest traditions of the Inquisition were being resurrected.

"About this time (the end of August, 1936) a procession with the Archbishop of Toledo at its head marched through the streets of Pamplona carrying an image of the Madonna del Pilar. When it was over, the image of the Madonna was set up in the middle of the principal square of the town, and the clergy were drawn up round it in military formation; after a short ceremony, sixty prisoners were shot 'to the honour and glory of the Virgin' and the accompaniment of a peal of bells."

A letter written by a Catholic priest in Valladolid to an English colleague, the Rev. E. B. Short, of Bulwell (Nottingham), breathes the same medieval spirit.

" . . . Much is to be done," it concludes. "They will do it. Communism . . . is to be burnt from the land. No false sentimentality. They are offered the Sacrament and shot. If they blaspheme the Sacrament, they are flogged before being shot. More than 3,000 have been shot here. Many to follow. Each case is scrupulously examined."

This unparalleled effusion on the part of a priest appeared in the "Nottingham Evening News" of November 26th, 1936. Five days later the same paper published the following letter to the editor:

"A PRIEST'S LETTER"

"SIR,

"Regarding the disgraceful letter to the Bulwell priest from his co-religionist in Valladolid, Spain, published last

Thursday, it is reminiscent of the dark ages, or at least some 400 years ago. When Philip and Mary of Spain, egged on by the bigoted and cruel priesthood, sent the Armada, with numerous priests replete with various instruments of torture on board for the spiritual uplift of our heretic forbears.

"Happily, priests and torture machines found a watery grave in the great storms that decimated the Armada.

"Doubtless had he lived at that time, the Valladolid priest would have been on board one of Philip's galleons in charge of his pet instrument of torture.

"It is the same bigotry and hatred that burnt Ridley and Latimer at the stake.

"It would be interesting to know if our Valladolid Christian is 'blessing' Franco's Moors as they pass by his seminary?

"'Essex Farm,' Kimberley, Notts."

The indictment implicit in these documents is directed against only a section of the Spanish clergy, primarily against the hierarchy at the top, the Princes of the Church and the Bishops. A considerable section of the clergy with a social conscience was staunchly Republican.

In contrast to the grim scenes in Pamplona and Gerona, really touching incidents have from time to time been recorded which reveal how close is the tie binding simple village priests to their flocks. In the village of Calahorra, in the Ebro Valley, the priest, at the peril of his life, prevented a massacre of Republicans and Socialists. Similar incidents have been reported from several little towns in the Basque provinces.

The whole course of the Civil War has shown that the Spanish people can be relied upon to react instinctively to such differences of behaviour. Personalities such as those of the Archbishop of Toledo and the Bishop of Mondoñedo

have very gravely discredited the Spanish clergy in the eyes of the people; but in those cases where the priests have displayed human feeling and shown understanding of the misery of the peasants, both believers and non-believers have respected them, protected them, and treated them with that spontaneous warmth which is so typical of the simple Spaniard. There were little villages in Catalonia where the Anarchists protected the priest, whose church had been occupied against his will by the insurgents, against the fury of the crowd and got him away safely.

In Madrid a Militiaman of the Fifth Regiment showed me with pride a much-thumbed letter that he had been carrying about in his pocket.

"We feel we must express our thanks to the Militia for its kind behaviour and the assistance it has given us. Permit us to express in particular our grateful admiration for the way in which your Militiamen have respected the art treasures and objects of value in our chapels.

"SISTER VERONICA LA GASCA.

"Capuchine Convent, Plaza de Conde Toreno, Madrid."

2. THE INSURGENTS AND THE CHURCH

"When the troops of the Moorish Foreign Legion entered Pamplona, their black faces still blacker from the dust and heat of the battle of Badajoz, they were enthusiastically acclaimed. 'This is no civil war, sir,' a woman exclaimed to me, 'it is a Crusade!'"

This excerpt from a message which appeared at the end of August in a Right-wing French newspaper, is significant as illustrating to what heights of inanity people are still able to attain in the twentieth century. For the lady in Pamplona who greeted the Foreign Legionaries and Moors as crusaders is by no means an exception. The rebel propagandists set themselves from the beginning to create in

Spain, as also abroad, an atmosphere reminiscent of the Crusades. They relied on the assumption that all faithful Catholics in Spain were in their camp. This assumption has proved to be erroneous.

On October 4th, 1936, six weeks after the outbreak of the insurrection, Don José Aguirre, the leader of the Basque Catholic Nationalist Party, made the following declaration before the assembled Cortes:

"I regard it as of particular importance at this moment to state emphatically that we of the Basque country are all with you against Fascism, and that we are quite especially so because of our undeviating Christian and Catholic principles. You can count on our being and remaining wholeheartedly and loyally on your side. Christ chose neither bayonet nor gun to win the world. A Christian movement such as ours vindicates social progress. For what other reason did Christ come into the world? We come from the people, we are the descendants of the people, just as Christ came from the people, and we are with Him and with the people in this fight. Our Church is the Church of the poor and humble."

Behind the man who made this profession of faith was ranged the majority of the Basque Catholics. With those of the Catalan Catholics who are loyal to the Government they amount to about one third of all the Catholics of Spain. The Basque country is, moreover, the one province of Spain which has adhered most strictly to the fundamental principles of the Christian faith. It is likewise the only province of Spain in which a Christian Social movement with its roots in the people can be compared for strength with the Socialist Workers' movement. The Basques of Bilbao were, even after a year of civil war, still more Catholic than "red".

But they would have no truck with Crusader Franco. In Irun, San Sebastian, Durango, Guernica, Bilbao—the self-styled Defender of the Faith has had to subdue the

Catholic provinces step by step after a hard struggle, and with the help of Mohammedan troops.

What is the deduction to be drawn from this? That "true" Catholics are against Franco and that only the bishops and the hypocritical land-owners are with him? Not at all. Such an assumption would be as erroneous as the assumption that all Catholics were on his side. In the Spanish question one must be on one's guard against broad generalizations. The truth of the matter is that the rift runs right through the Catholic Church. The great majority of the Catholics of Navarra have been without doubt behind Franco from the beginning; the great majority of the Basque Catholics have from the beginning been behind the Government.

The whole question hinges not on religious, but on political, doctrines. The contrast in the behaviour of the Basque and the Navarran Catholics is inexplicable as a theological problem, but perfectly explicable as a political problem.

The Basques have striven for centuries to attain linguistic, cultural and economic autonomy. History has taught them that the liberal democratic movement in Spain favours the cause of racial minorities and that movements aiming at absolute monarchy and dictatorship, on the other hand, are bitterly opposed to all demands for autonomy. The Catholics of the Basque country had everything to hope for from the Republic and nothing from the Generals. Franco's first act after the taking of Bilbao was to abolish Basque fiscal autonomy.

In Navarra the position was exactly the reverse. The Pyrenean valleys of Navarra had remained a stronghold of medieval tradition; it was Spain's Vendée and the birth-place of the Carlist movement. In Navarra Catholicism was synonymous with the political programme of absolute monarchy, with the retention of patriarchal, feudal conditions in agriculture.

The Catholicism of the Basque country, a predominantly industrial province, professed the faith of the "Church of the poor and humble", the Christianity of the Sermon on the Mount, of the "camel and the needle's eye".

The Catholicism of Navarra professed the faith of the Church of Torquemada, of the quarrelsome and worldly Popes of the Middle Ages, of the Church Militant.

It is one of the fundamental untruths of the rebel propaganda to designate this war a religious war. One need not be an orthodox Christian to consider it blasphemy for ambitious Generals to use God as an excuse for their insurrection. The struggle between feudalism and democracy in Spain has as little to do with religion as had those picture postcards in 1914 which portrayed God as blessing a French mine-layer or a German submarine, as the case might be.

The crusading spirit of the rebel Generals only persists so long as believers and priests identify themselves with the purely political aims of the insurrection. The moment that priests, and even bishops, cease to see eye to eye with these political aims they are treated as enemies, and either imprisoned or shot. A well-known case in point is that of the Bishop of Vitoria and Canon Don Lucius, who, at the beginning of the struggle in the Basque country, were arrested by Carlists together with thirteen pupils of the Priests' Seminary and shot.

The number of Catholic priests executed by the rebels has been computed at over 150.

The *Protestants* in rebel territory were given a particularly bad time.

The Protestants form a small, but socially far from unimportant, minority in Spain, since their adherents are drawn for the most part from the educated middle classes.

The liberal and strongly social character of the Protestant Minority Church in Spain made it inevitable that members of the Evangelical community should be regarded from the first as suspect and as enemies of the Burgos régime.

Here is an extract from a document in my possession which is based on an investigation conducted by the Protestant community in Madrid:

"The members of the Protestant Faith in Madrid, who are unconnected with any political party, deem it their duty to make known to the public the following facts with regard to the persecution and murder of dignitaries and members of the Lutheran Church by Spanish Fascists.

"In Granada the Protestant pastors José and García Fernández and Salvador Iñiguez, together with the wife of the former, were shot. Another dignitary of the Lutheran Church, Samuel Palonuque, is, if he is yet alive, in prison.

"In Córdoba Pastor Antonio García was expelled; before he had time to leave the town all his furniture was removed by Carlists, who threatened to kill him. Antonio García and his wife fled that same night to Gibraltar without any luggage and completely without resources.

"In San Fernando Pastor Miguel Blanco was shot under martial law in the presence of his mother and a number of members of the Protestant Church 'to serve as an example to heretics', it was stated in the official report. It is feared that his fellow Pastor Francisco López of Puerto Real has met with a like fate.

"Since the beginning of August Carlos Linean, of the village of Miada near Badajoz, and Luis Cabrera, the Protestant teacher of the neighbouring village of Santa Amalia, have disappeared and nothing further has been heard of them.

"In Ibahernando, in the Province of Cáceres, a number

of Protestants were shot, among them the well-known notable Francisco Tirado.

"In Santa Amalia the wife of a Protestant agricultural labourer was saturated in petrol and set alight, and then, after being terribly burned, she was beheaded with an axe."

I received a typed copy of this document at the beginning of November, 1936, in Madrid. The copy bore neither signature nor date and the incidents related seemed to me so crude that at first I doubted the authenticity of the document. I made enquiries and gained possession of papers which confirm the allegations in the report, among them a letter written by Pastor Elías Araújo of the Protestant Mission in Madrid to Professor F. J. Paul of Belfast. The letter contains the text of the first report from Antonio García, the Pastor mentioned in paragraph three of the above document. He confirms among other things the shooting of Pastor Miguel Blanco in San Fernando, as well as that of Pastor Iñiguez of Granada and of his predecessor García Fernández (see paragraph 2 of the document). Only Samuel Palonuque, thanks to the adroit intervention of his wife, escaped abroad after five days of imprisonment.

Further material regarding the persecution of Protestants in rebel territory was published by Dr. Inge at the end of November in the "Spectator" and the "Church of England Newspaper". Dr. Inge related, among other things, that the Protestant Pastor of Salamanca, his wife and two children were executed as "heretics" by the rebels and that the Protestant Pastor of Valladolid was burned alive in gaol. The French Protestant newspaper, "Evangile et Liberté," writing of this ghastly revelation, expressed the fear that:

" . . . the overthrow of the constitutionally elected Republican Government would also mean the downfall

of Spanish Protestantism, as the result of a fresh wave of persecution of Protestants and the re-introduction of *auto-da-fés*, with the difference that instead of the formal ceremonial of the stake and the death-masks of former times the far more drastic and summary firing squads and the executioner's axe would be brought into play. . . ."

So much for the treatment of Protestants by the rebels. That their treatments of the Jews is even worse goes without saying. The rebel Press is particularly fond of referring in catch-words, strictly after the German pattern, to "Jews, Freemasons and Marxists", who must be extirpated for the good of Spain. In Spanish Morocco, at the beginning of the insurrection, the Jewish communities were forced to contribute to Franco's war chest, and prominent Jewish citizens were arrested and shot. In Tangier Phalangists posted up anti-Semitic notices, in which the Mohammedans were adjured "to declare war against Jews and Communists". Finally, in Tetuan, in the months of July and August, 1936, regular pogroms were carried out in the Jewish districts, the organized origin of which was untraceable. Similarly popular editions of the "Elders of Zion" and translations of German anti-Semitic literature were widely disseminated.

Thus the problem of Franco's position with regard to religion may be summed up as follows:

Franco does not represent the interests of believers against the forces that threaten religion. He represents the interests of that section of the Catholic population which is Catholic *and* reactionary. Catholics with Republican sympathies are persecuted by him with the same ruthlessness as are Republicans who profess no religion. The Protestants who, owing to their social status, are almost

entirely Republican, are treated as out-and-out enemies, as are the Jews.

The analogy with the attitude of the State to the Church under other dictatorships is unmistakable. In Germany, too, the National-Socialists, before seizing power, maintained that they were the defenders of the Faith and of culture against the godless Weimar Republic; scarcely had they attained power than they began to persecute that section of the Catholic and Protestant Church which did not submit to the dictates of worldly tyrants and refused to identify themselves with their methods and political aims. In Germany, too, disagreements and splits occurred within the Protestant and Catholic Churches for purely worldly, political reasons; there were Catholic Cardinals and Protestant Bishops who upheld the ancient traditions of Christendom and with exemplary courage entered the lists against tyranny; and there were also dignitaries of the Church who became the willing tools of that same tyranny. It would appear that wherever modern dictatorships of the Fascist type come to power, the Church has to undergo a historical trial similar to that which it underwent in the early Middle Ages when the power of the absolute monarchies was being consolidated—a trial leading to the same internal divisions and dissensions.

CHAPTER VI

PROPAGANDA¹

“ . . . The very magnitude of a lie endows it with a certain element of credibility, for the broad masses of the people are at bottom more liable to be corrupted than to be consciously and deliberately bad; thus the very naïveté of their mentality makes them fall more easily victim to a great lie than a small one, since they themselves may sometimes lie on a small scale, but would be very much ashamed of lying on a grand scale.”²

I. POLITICAL PROPAGANDA.

Propaganda has from the start played a very big part in the Spanish Civil War; and propaganda for foreign consumption has been almost of more importance for both sides than propaganda for home consumption.

Roughly there are three arguments of a political nature which Franco has employed in his propaganda abroad. Varying stress is laid on each of these according to the country for which it is intended. These arguments are:

1. The Generals began the Civil War because the Communists had established a reign of terror in Madrid.
2. The Generals began the Civil War because the Communists were planning to establish a reign of terror in Madrid.
3. It was not the Generals but the Madrid Government that began the Civil War.

In England and France the rebel propaganda mainly turns on arguments 1 and 2; i.e., the Generals embarked on the insurrection in order to save Spain from Communism. For consumption within the Third Reich a much simpler line is taken; i.e., the Generals did not revolt at all.

¹ All italics used in the quotations in this chapter are the author's.

² Adolf Hitler, "My Struggle."

No reference is made to the fact of the military insurrection on July 18th; instead it is simply stated that the Spanish *Government* began the Civil War.

Incredible as it may sound, this is the *official* German version. It can be found in a brochure, published in November, 1936, by the *Eher Verlag*, Munich, official publishers to the National Socialist Party. (Amongst other books published by this firm is Hitler's "Mein Kampf"; Adolf Hitler is a partner in the firm, and is responsible for its publications not only in his political capacity but as a private individual.) The title of the brochure is "Moscow, the Hangman of Spain".

On page 11 of this brochure the outbreak of the Civil War in Madrid on July 19th is described as follows:

"Strange things are happening in Madrid. Streets are cordoned off, traffic is at a standstill, men in completely unmilitary clothing, as well as young people and women, have posted themselves at the street corners. Shots ring out.

Only the district in the neighbourhood of the barracks of Madrid is suspiciously quiet. It is considered expedient for the *Workers' Government* to take control of them. In the early hours of July 20th the cannonade begins. There is a hail of shells, and heavy bombs are rained on the barracks in the suburb of Arguelles. The *aggressors* bring up machine-guns to prevent all attempts at sorties. After four hours the garrison, half blown to bits, hoists the white flag on the Montana barracks. . . ."

This is—I must emphasize it once again—the official account, published by the official Party publishers, of the outbreak of the Spanish Civil War.

The following passage on page 13 serves to amplify the one quoted above:

"In *La Linea near Madrid* violent battles are raging. The streets are heaped with corpses. General Pogas,

the new Minister of the Interior, has taken the step of arming the civil population. Is Malaga in flames? A huge column of smoke is reported to have been seen over the town. In La Linea corpses are taken off in lorries, heaped up somewhere in sacrificial piles, soaked in petrol and consumed by the flames. When and where has anything like this ever happened, except in Bolshevik Russia? . . ."

One really has to read this passage twice to take it in. "La Linea near Madrid" is three hundred miles from Madrid as the crow flies. It is only half a mile from Gibraltar. It is, as a matter of fact, the coastal town at which Franco's Moroccan troops first disembarked. On July 19th, the date on which "corpses were taken off on lorries", it was already in rebel hands.

And so the document goes on, page after page; it is astonishing what the German official propagandists have the effrontery to put before the reader, secure in the fact that the banning of foreign newspapers deprives him of all opportunity of checking up on their statements.

The propaganda designed for France and England is not quite so crude in its methods. The fact that the Generals began the Civil War is, as far as possible, glossed over, but it is not openly denied. The main emphasis is laid, as has been said, on the assertion that Franco saved Spain from Communism and on the allegation either that the Communists were already masters of Spain before the revolt, or else that they were planning an insurrection and that Franco stole a march on them at the eleventh hour. Sometimes we find both these assertions existing side by side, without regard for the inherent logical contradiction. On page 26 of the famous Burgos "Red and Yellow Book"¹ the standard work of the rebel propagandists, it is stated:

¹"A Preliminary Official Report on Communist Atrocities in Southern Spain." Eyre and Spottiswoode, London, 1936. (All quotations are taken verbatim.)

“On July 18th General Franco and other leaders declared the National Revolt to free Spain from the Communist domination.”

And on page 27:

“It is thus established by documentary evidence that this great national movement was begun only just in time to forestall the Communist Revolution.”

It is impossible to comprehend why the Communists, if they were already masters of Spain, should have planned a revolution. But this is not the main point. The chief question is: how strong, in fact, was Communist influence in Spain before the Civil War?

As we have seen in an earlier chapter of this book, a Right Government was in the saddle in Spain right up to the elections of February 16th, 1936. On that day, despite the considerable handicap from which it suffered at the ballot-box, the *Frente Popular*, or coalition of Left parties, won a clear majority of the total votes and an even greater majority of the parliamentary seats.

“Victory of Communism in Spain,” cried the propagandists of the reaction. Was it a victory for the Communists?

The distribution of seats within the *Frente Popular* was as follows:

PEOPLE'S FRONT, February 1936

Parties

Republican Left	84
Republican Union	37
Republican Left Catalonia	36
Basque National Party	10
Socialist Party	89
Communist Party	16
Other Left Parties	5

Total 277

This means that the progressive centre parties obtained in all 167 seats, the Socialists 89, the Communists 16.

The Communists, it will thus be seen, were by far the weakest party.

Correspondingly they had neither a portfolio nor any influence worth mentioning in the governments that were formed between the elections in February and the outbreak of the Civil War in July. Their meetings were repeatedly banned, their papers censored. In Chapter IV I quoted an article from the “Mundo Obrero,” the official organ of the Communists, giving warning of the danger of a military insurrection and demanding the republicanization of the army. This article was banned by the censor, and Franco remained a General.

It was not until four months after the outbreak of the Civil War that for the first time two Communists joined Caballero's Government. They held the posts of Minister of Education and Minister of Agriculture. Their inclusion in the Government came about not by virtue of any numerical claim, but because the Republic, engaged as it was in a life and death struggle, was forced to form a war cabinet in which all parties had to share the responsibility. It goes without saying that in the later phases of the Civil War the Communists considerably increased in strength—periods of crisis always lead to a growth of the more extreme parties. This, however, was not the cause, but a consequence of Franco's insurrection.

So much for the numerical strength of the Communists in Spain before the revolt. Now a few words with regard to their policy.

After the establishment of a dictatorship in Germany

in March, 1933, the very existence of the Soviet Union depended to a certain extent on a military pact with France and the attitude of the Western democracies in the event of war. Revolutionary disturbances in the West might, as things were, merely weaken the military strength of the allied democracies, embarrass their governments and help those movements which aimed at dictatorship—such as those of Colonel de La Rocque in France, Gil Robles in Spain, Degrelle in Belgium and so on—to attain power. Should any of these movements gain a victory the immediate result in the country concerned would be a change to a pro-Hitler and anti-Russian orientation. The preservation of constitutional democracy in the Western countries therefore became of vital interest to Soviet Russia—and the safeguarding of Soviet Russia, as the Socialist fatherland, was, said the Communists, of paramount importance to Socialists everywhere.

The order of the day for the Communists was, therefore, the preservation of democracy in those countries in which it might yet be saved, and the prevention of dictatorship by a very broad and very elastic policy of coalition with other democratic parties. This policy found expression in support for the so-called People's Front movements which were inaugurated in France and Spain, and the germs of which have recently made their appearance in England.

This guiding line was as binding for the policy of the Communists in Spain as in every other country. They had sixteen seats in the Cortes out of a total of four hundred and seventy-three; any attempt to seize power in such circumstances would have been sheer madness and could have had only one result: that of assisting the reactionaries to attain power. The official thesis of the Spanish Communist Party was, consequently, that "the order of the day was not proletarian revolution but the establishment of a democratic State on the Western model."

In the first interview given by Azaña after the victory of the *Frente Popular* he stated (Chapter V): "No dangerous innovations. We are moderates. . . ." The Communists agreed with him. They had sixteen seats in the Cortes and had been given their marching orders.

In spite of all this Franco maintains that the Communists were planning an insurrection, but were not given time to carry it out.

In the "Red and Yellow Book" already mentioned, the relevant passages run as follows (pp. 25 and 26):

"*The Communist Plot.*

"All this time there had been repeated and well-founded rumours that the Communists had planned to seize power and declare a Spanish Soviet State. That the Communist risings were, in fact, part of a carefully prepared plan is incontrovertibly proved by the *synchronization of the local outbreaks and the similarity of the methods employed*, as can be seen from the accounts in this book. No haphazard risings could have been so systematic. The Communist rising was originally timed for some date between 3rd of May and June 29th, but was subsequently postponed until 29th or 30th July. This gave the Right an opportunity which they were swift to seize. . . .

"On July 18th General Franco and other leaders declared the National revolt to free Spain from the Communist domination. Secret orders issued by Communist headquarters for the formation of a National Soviet have been discovered and they give full details of the procedure which was to be followed. After the closing of the frontiers and ports, 'the execution of all those who appear on the black lists' and the 'elimination'

of political and military persons likely to play any part in a counter-revolution was to be at once commenced.

"The National troops, described as 'Rebels' or 'Insurgents' have been, and are to-day, fighting against the Communists and Anarchists who seized power from the weak and effete Government of those Prime Ministers appointed by President Azaña.

"If further evidence of the complicity of the Madrid Government were necessary the appointment of Señor Largo Caballero provides it, as he was openly designated as the President of the National Soviet of Spain. Moreover, on the outbreak of hostilities, the Madrid Government, within a few days, issued arms indiscriminately to criminals released from jail, the lowest scum of the slums, to youths and even to children.

"An interesting sidelight on the Communist plan was the provision made for a pretended 'Fascist' attack on the headquarters of the C.N.T. as soon as the movement was begun. (*Inmediatamente se simulará una agresión fascista al Centro de la C.N.T.*)

"It is thus established by documentary evidence that this great national movement was begun only just in time to forestall the Communist Revolution organized months before to establish a Soviet in Spain at the end of July."

The assertion as to the alleged planning of a Communist insurrection is based, as we see, on two points.

In the first place on the "synchronization of the local outbreaks and the similarity of the methods employed".

What kind of outbreaks were these?

The book enumerates as evidence seventeen little Andalusian villages in which, it is alleged, atrocities were committed. For the moment we shall assume that all the data in the book are correct and reproduce in the following table the dates which the book gives for the outbreak of these excesses:

I. ARAHAL	on July 19th.
II. AZNALCOLLAR	„ July 18th.
III. LA CAMPANA	„ July 13th.
IV. CAMPILLO	„ July 20th.
V. CARMONA	as soon as it became known that the movement to save Spain had begun in Seville.
VI. CAZALLA	on July 18th.
VII. CONSTANTINA	„ July 18th.
VIII. HUELVA	„ July 19th.
IX. LORA DEL RIO	„ July 23rd.
X. MOGUER	„ July 2nd.
XI. MORON	„ July 18th.
XII. PALMA DEL CONDADO	„ July 18th.
XIII. PALMA DEL RIO	„ July 18th.
XIV. POSADAS	„ July 18th.
XV. PUENTE GENIL	„ July 24th.
XVI. UTRERA	„ August 17th or 18th.
XVII. BAENA	„ July 18th.

Now Franco's revolt broke out on the night of July 17th.

If the events in these seventeen isolated Andalusian villages prove anything at all, it is that the military revolt aroused the most violent opposition among the Andalusian peasants and that as a direct reaction to it there was an outbreak of murders and homicidal attacks.

What else had the Generals expected?

But that the natural reaction of the population should have been used subsequently as an excuse for the insurrection, that effect should have been confused with cause, was an extremely unfair piece of demagoguery. It requires, indeed, a good deal of effrontery to adduce the "synchronisation of the local outbreaks" as "incontrovertible proof of a planned Communist rising", when the dates clearly show that the excesses can be traced to a common

and simultaneous origin, namely, the military insurrection itself.

The formula applied in this case is a classic one. It is, in effect: "In the first place the others began the whole thing, and in the second place we only began it in order to forestall them."

Now as to proof No. 2. The book asserts that "secret orders for the formation of a National Soviet" were discovered, and treats us to a few sensational quotations.

If such a document had really existed, Franco would have scored a moral victory. The publication of this document would have been a decisive blow to the Government cause. The book in which this document is discussed bears these words on the back of the title page: "First Printed—October 1936". I am writing these lines on July 17th, 1937, the anniversary of the outbreak of the Civil War, and to this day Franco has not published the document.

The alleged quotations mentioned above make no reference to the origin, date or name of the authors of the alleged documents. All of which is, to put it mildly, naïve.

But it is precisely in this exploitation of the naïve mentality of the people that lies the strength of the propaganda employed by dictators and would-be dictators. The national *coup d'état*, carried out just in time to prevent a Communist rising, has a suspiciously familiar ring about it. Hitler affirmed that he only seized power in Germany because he had discovered documents relating to a Communist plan for a rising, and the naïve German people believed him. To this very day he has not published these documents, and still the naïve believe him. He was forced to let most of the accused in the Reichstag Fire Trial be acquitted—and still the naïve believe him.

The Greek Dictator Metaxas asserted after his military insurrection of August 4th, 1936, that he had only seized power because the Communists were planning a rising. The Communists in Greece were an insignificant little

group, and the documents on which his assertions were based have not been published to this day.

Finally Franco arrives on the scene, precipitates a revolt and produces the same formula like a rabbit from a top-hat: he has only begun the revolt in order to forestall the Communists; and the naïve masses are still not weary of believing this story. You have only to utter the magic word "Moscow" and they become just like children threatened with a bogey-man.

I fancy that if there were no Communists the dictators would have had to invent them.

This dictum must be taken more or less literally. Since there were only sixteen Communists in the Cortes, and since the Communist Party was numerically too weak to provide an excuse for the revolt, the rebel propagandists availed themselves of the crude but effective subterfuge of simply christening that two-thirds of the Spanish people which stood by the Government "Communists"—and that, too, with astonishing frankness. On page 16 of the Burgos Book we read:

"Organizations of the Left.

"The extremist organizations of the Left, which were openly Communist are:

The Socialists—known as U.G.T. (Union General de Trabajadores, Union of Workers).

Syndicalists or Anarchist-Communists—known as C.N.T. (Confederacion Nacional de Trabajadores, National Confederation of Workers).

Anarchists—F. A. I. (Federacion Anarquista Ibérica, Iberian Anarchist Federation).

(Note:—The word 'Communism' is hereafter used to denominate the efforts and policies of these parties.)"

Now in the first place "The Socialists" are not the U.G.T. The Socialists—that is, the Labour Party of Spain—are called P.S.O.E. (*Partido Socialista Obrero Español*).

The U.G.T., on the other hand, is not a party, but a Trades Union organization. It corresponds roughly to the English Trades Union Congress.

It is astonishing to find that the Committee of Enquiry set up by the National Government, to which the authorship of the book is attributed, is not even conversant with political parties in Spain.

Still more astonishing is the fact that it has forgotten to include amongst these "open Communist parties" the P.C.E., the Communist Party of Spain itself.

The assertion that all these organizations "are openly Communist" would, translated into English terms, be tantamount to saying that Sir Walter Citrine and Major Attlee were Communists.

But even these bounds are overstepped. The catchword, the "Bolshevist Government in Valencia", a Government which, it so happens, includes the Liberal Parties of the Centre, would, translated into English terms, be equivalent to stating that not only Citrine, Lansbury and Attlee, but Lloyd George, Sir Archibald Sinclair and the late Lord Snowden were also "Reds" and "Bolsheviks".

One is in danger of lapsing into melancholia in face of a world that is prepared to swallow such inanities.

2. ATROCITY PROPAGANDA

I do not believe it to be true that demagogues lie for temperamental reasons. Even the most notorious demagogue dislikes consciously making untrue assertions, and only does so when he has no option but to do so.

Nor do I believe that Franco's propagandists resort to such methods out of sheer *joie de vivre*. They have no option.

The rebels are fighting for a military dictatorship, for a corporate State, for clericalism—causes which are very unpopular in France and England. They are fighting, furthermore, against a liberal, democratic Republic, the structure, constitution and political programme of which

have been directly modelled on those of the Western democracies; they are fighting against such things as freedom of assembly, of the Press and of opinion, agrarian reform, the right to form Trades Unions, universal suffrage—all of which things are part of the ABC of most Western Europeans.

Genuine political arguments, therefore, with the exception of the Communist bogey, were of no use as propaganda to Franco in Western Europe. So he deliberately chose a form of propaganda that from the time of the ritual murder myths of the Middle Ages until the time of the Reichstag fire and the Abyssinian campaign has always proved an unflinching standby whenever it has been essential to avoid awkward political discussions and to justify one's own terroristic acts by pointing to those of the other side: what has come to be known as atrocity propaganda.

This was intended specially for English consumption. For, after all, what had Franco to offer that was likely to be attractive to England? Was he to tell the English frankly that he had launched his revolt because he was in favour of dictatorship and opposed to Parliamentarism? He preferred to tell them stories of children crucified and monks burnt alive.

Was he to tell them that his patriotism consisted in letting the cities of his native land be conquered for him by Italian troops, in hounding on African natives against his own compatriots? He preferred to tell them stories of virgins violated and monasteries in flames.

Was he to tell them that he had handed over the Balearics, the property of his dearly-beloved country, to the Italians as the price for their support of his ambitious plans; that he had sent for German experts to encircle Gibraltar with batteries of long-range guns, presumably so as to safeguard the British sea route to the Dominions?

He preferred to tell them stories of mangled corpses, of the putting-out of eyes, and of Red cannibalism. This

kind of propaganda is always more effective and sensational and saves one the necessity of logical argument.

It would, of course, be absurd to deny that atrocities have been committed on the Government side. The Spaniards show an undeniable tendency towards cruelty; the celebrating of bull fights as national festivals is hardly an engaging trait in the character of a people. I am convinced that enough acts of brutality have been committed on both sides to satisfy Europe's demand for horrors for the next hundred years. The "black-is-black" and "white-is-white" technique of many propagandists of the Left—Fascist devils on the one hand, democratic angels on the other—is just as absurd as the "red-and-white" technique of the rebel propagandists. The stories of the burning of churches in Barcelona and the villages of Andalusia are no fable; I have seen such churches with my own eyes. A good many of them served as hiding-places for rebels and priests armed with rifles. Others, however, did not, and were burned nevertheless.

Let me repeat: only demagogues and abstract doctrinaires with no first-hand experience of the Civil War can deny that a great number of abominable acts have been committed on both sides. But the essential difference lies in whether these crimes are spontaneous and sporadic acts of indiscipline—or part of a systematic policy of Terror and committed with the full knowledge and on the orders of the responsible authorities.

And herein indeed lies the fundamental difference in the behaviour of the two protagonists.

In Chapter IV I have attempted to show, by means of documentary evidence, that the mutinous Generals regarded Terror applied to the civilian population as an integral part of their plan for an insurrection. Not out of private malevolence or sadism; but because they were planning the establishment of a military dictatorship relying for support on only a very restricted stratum of the population,

and because Terror is an indispensable function of every military dictatorship. The majority of the crimes that I have instanced in the foregoing chapters were committed partly on the direct orders of responsible officers and partly, as in the case of the wholesale execution of prisoners, on the direct orders of the Generalissimo himself (who, according to the constitution of the Burgos Junta, has ultimate power of life and death over prisoners).

On the other hand, the Republican Government of Cesares Quiroga, a Liberal, was taken completely unawares by the insurrection of July 17th. It had no troops worth mentioning for the defence of its legal authority and was faced with the necessity of hurriedly arming the Citizens' Defence Units and the Workers' Militia, if it did not wish passively to submit to the mutinous Generals. The inevitable consequence of this was that arms found their way into the hands of a number of irresponsible elements, some of them from the ranks of the Anarchists, others mere hooligans. During the first few days after the outbreak of the insurrection, when there was street fighting in nearly all of the Spanish towns, the Government was not in complete control of the masses, which only very slowly and over a period of many months were transformed into a disciplined army.

The most difficult task of all was to restrain the peasants in the outlying districts of Andalusia and Estramadura, who were in a state of raging fury.

It was Franco's clique that by its revolt had unleashed this storm. Aptly they might say with Mark Antony, "Mischief, thou art afoot, Take thou what course thou wilt." It, and it alone, bears the responsibility before history for all the mischief that ensued.

Ninety per cent of all the excesses committed by the armed forces of the Government were committed during this period of chaos and confusion, which lasted no longer than from two to three days in the large towns, and from

eight to ten in the villages. With astounding speed the Government made itself master of the situation in those districts where the revolt was stemmed. Under martial law the death penalty was instituted for all looting and molestation of private individuals. The officers of the Militia were made personally responsible for the fate of their prisoners of war. The undisciplined carnage of the first few days became a regular Civil War.

The three to four hundred thousand men who were fighting for the legal Republic on the various fronts did not constitute an army. They were armed civilians: merchants, students, artisans, workers, employees, doctors, peasants. They came fresh from civilian life. They lacked the ruthlessness towards civilians of the professional soldier. They lacked the African ferocity of the Moors. They lacked the notorious unscrupulousness of the Foreign Legionaries. Soldierly cruelty was as little a part of their character as were other soldierly qualities. They were humane and not soldierly, and they lost one battle after another. They had neither the inclination nor the need to terrorise the population, to make warning examples, to safeguard the territory behind the lines by the application of methods of Terror. For they were literally of the people; they enjoyed the confidence and sympathy of the civilian population, whose life they had shared but the day before and whose sympathies they could but alienate by terrorist acts.

Therein lies the fundamental difference between the behaviour of the two armies. Just as fundamentally different was the attitude of the two Commands. The very principles which the Madrid Government was upholding—democracy, humanitarianism, liberalism—are terms of derision in the mouths of Generals in backward, feudal countries. One could accuse these newly-fledged ministers of almost every failing—of being amateur, dilettante, irresolute, timid, incompetent; of being blind and of having allowed themselves to be taken unawares; of believing in compromise

at the very moment when the guns of the Generals were being trained on them. But the very idea that a Caballero, an Azaña, a del Vayo or a Prieto could have displayed tendencies towards terrorism and cruelty, will seem to anyone with even a slight knowledge of Spain a very poor joke.

How much truth is there, then, in the atrocity stories disseminated without restraint by rebel propagandists and their foreign supporters?

It is true that in the first few undisciplined days after the revolt the embittered masses set fire to churches, burned palaces, went in for lynch law.

It is untrue that after this period acts of cruelty were perpetrated to any great extent, or systematically, against the civilian population or prisoners of war.

And what of the execution of the hostages of Irun?

And the torturing of prisoners of war, the crucifixion of officers, the burning alive, castrating and crippling of true patriots?

Lies—all of it.

This cannot be proved in every case. But it can be proved in a number of typical instances.

One of the most effective propaganda campaigns launched by the rebels was that relating to the alleged shooting of hostages by the Madrid Government; and of all these stories of the maltreatment of hostages the most impressive was that foisted on the world in the early days of September, 1936: the famous myth of the hostages in Fort Guadaloupe during the Siege of Irun.

The affair caused a particular stir in France, because the alleged happenings took place in the immediate vicinity of the French frontier. I propose, therefore, to trace in broad outline the whole history of this story, from the time of its birth until it finally fizzled out, from the French newspapers—and, moreover, exclusively from Conservative and Right-wing newspapers.

Hostages to be massacred when first rebel shell fired.

"l'Intransigeant", August 18th, 1936.

". . . It is reported here that the bombardment of San Sebastian by rebel ships has just begun. It is stated that the moment the first rebel shell is fired, the 700 hostages are to be shot."

The hostages of Fort Guadalupe reported to have been exposed to rebel fire in the streets and squares of Irun.

"Paris-Soir", September 2nd, 1936.

"On Tuesday afternoon the unfortunate hostages who had been imprisoned in Fort Guadalupe since the outbreak of hostilities were taken into the town of Irun. . . . In the evening a terrible rumour went the rounds which, alas, was soon to be officially confirmed. In reply to General Mola's brutal and unexpected ultimatum, the above-mentioned hostages were shot."

The Battle of Irun and the Massacre of Hostages.

"Echo de Paris", September 2nd, 1936.

". . . The sanguinary instincts of the Marxists know no bounds. . . ."

The Massacre of Hostages.

"Echo de Paris", September 5th, 1936. (page 1).

"News has been received that all hostages have been shot."

(Same edition, page 3).

". . . It is reported that the 170 hostages in the Fort of Guadalupe will be shot at 9 o'clock to-morrow morning. . . ."

The Fate of the Hostages.

"Petit Parisien", September 5th, 1936.

"According to the latest messages from British sources received from the Spanish frontier the Government troops,

before retreating from Irun, shot all the hostages imprisoned in Fort Guadalupe. . . ."

Some Hostages managed to escape from Fort Guadalupe.

"Echo de Paris", September 6th, 1936.

". . . In the general confusion five prisoners managed to escape and take refuge at Hendaye. They are very exhausted and have suffered not only physically but morally, for not a day passed without their being informed that they were to be shot. They do not know exactly how many of their comrades were in the Fort, but it is believed that there must have been some two hundred, the fate of whom they do not know."

The Fate of the Hostages.

"Le Temps", September 7th, 1936.

"Contrary to the rumours that have been circulated during the last few days, the hostages in Fort Guadalupe have not been shot. We have this news from an absolutely reliable source, having spoken personally on Saturday afternoon to one of the hostages who escaped. . . . Only Señor Honorio Maura, former leader of the parliamentary group that favoured the 'restoration of Spain', and Deunza, a deputy of the Gil Robles party, were shot. . . ."

"Paris-Soir", September 11th, 1936.

"The hostages have left the town. They have not been released, but they are in safety at Bilbao."

"Le Temps", September 13th, 1936.

"There are actually 3,850 prisoners at Bilbao . . . who are quite well treated. . . . The 650 hostages who arrived on Wednesday from San Sebastian . . . received the best treatment of all."

In conclusion let us return once more to the famous Burgos Book. We tried before to analyse the political

arguments contained in it; let us now turn to the actual allegations it contains.

It is worth our while to do this, for the book raised a considerable stir in England, and went through five impressions in the first two months after its appearance in October, 1936. The full title of the book is:

A PRELIMINARY
OFFICIAL REPORT ON
THE ATROCITIES
COMMITTED IN SOUTHERN SPAIN
IN JULY AND AUGUST, 1936, BY
THE COMMUNIST FORCES OF THE
MADRID GOVERNMENT
TOGETHER WITH A BRIEF HISTORICAL
NOTE OF THE COURSE OF RECENT EVENTS
IN SPAIN

Issued by authority of
THE COMMITTEE OF INVESTI-
GATION APPOINTED BY THE
NATIONAL GOVERNMENT AT
BURGOS

Price One Shilling and Sixpence net
EYRE AND SPOTTISWOODE
LONDON
1936

Let me first make a remark as to first principles. It is a tradition for committees of enquiry into disputes to be composed of neutral personages, and in this alone lies the whole meaning of the term "Committee of Investigation". Only in such circumstances do its findings carry weight. In the Spanish Civil War there were more than enough

neutral observers available; foreign journalists, diplomats, medical missions, and so forth. The "National Government of Burgos" preferred, however, to *appoint* a Committee of Investigation with regard to the composition of which they made no mention.

The publication of the Burgos Committee of Enquiry is anonymous, it brings forward no neutral witnesses, produces no documentary evidence, and confines itself to referring no less than five times in the course of the foreword to its report to "the authenticity of the reports of the atrocities committed", "the trustworthiness of its evidence", "evidence which proves without doubt", on "documented and verified accounts", and a "complete and irrefutable account".

Of the introduction to the book and the political arguments brought forward in it we have already spoken. In the "documentary section" seventeen Andalusian towns and villages are mentioned in alphabetical order (Arahal, Aznalcollar, La Campana, Campillo, Carmona, Cazalla, Constantina, Huelva, Lora del Rio, Moguer, Moron, Palma del Condado, Palma del Rio, Posadas, Puente Genil, Utrera, Baena) and the "atrocities of the Reds" described, unsupported by the testimony of a single neutral witness. It so happens that I am in a position to disprove a number of these allegations.

As related in another section of this book, I was from August 25th to 28th in Seville, the headquarters of General Queipo de Llano. Shortly before this Raymond Lacoste, correspondent of the "Echo de Paris" was also in Seville. Lacoste interviewed Queipo de Llano a few days before I did. My interview with Queipo de Llano, which appeared in the London "News Chronicle", in the Paris "Oeuvre" and a whole string of other newspapers, and has never yet been refuted, is described on pp. 32, 33 of this book.

When I asked whether His Excellency had in his possession documentary evidence with regard to these excesses,

he replied in the negative; he had special couriers, he said, who brought him verbal information with regard to incidents of this kind from various sectors of the front.

After the interview I was told by my fellow journalists that Lacoste had been luckier than I, for he had obtained from Queipo de Llano a regular printed list of the people done to death in the village of Arahal; but that ever since Queipo had refused to give any more material to the Press, because he himself was preparing a "brochure on the atrocities". This list actually appeared in the "Echo de Paris"; it consisted of thirty-two names of prisoners alleged to have been burned alive by Government troops before the evacuation of Arahal. The same list of names, with the same accompanying description, appears on p. 33 of the Burgos Book in the chapter headed "Arahal".

This would appear to show that the documents on which the Burgos Book is based either originated directly from Queipo de Llano, which has all along seemed probable, since the book confines itself exclusively to Andalusia, Queipo's sovereign territory, or at least that the two stories emanate from the same source.

And now what about the trustworthiness of Queipo's information, which was communicated to him verbally by a special courier? In one case we are in a position to identify the person of such a courier. The chapter in the Burgos Book dealing with the atrocities in Lora del Rio quotes an eye-witness.

"These facts have been gathered from the statements of a number of responsible witnesses who were present at the events described. Among them . . . is Don José María Linan, local leader of the Spanish Phalanx. He was taken prisoner from the beginning of the upheaval and was to have been shot on the night of the day when the Nationalist troops arrived to liberate the village" (p. 50).

Here, then, we have one of Queipo's "responsible witnesses", upon whose evidence the Burgos Book relies: the Group Leader of the *Falange Española* in Lora del Rio!

As against this the same Queipo announced in the "Echo de Paris" of August 22nd, 1936, through his mouth-piece Raymond Lacoste:

"In Lora del Rio the local Group Leader of the *Falange Española* had both legs broken; screaming with agony, he begged to be shot. Finally they sent an old priest to the half-dead man, and a final shot dispatched them both to eternity. . . ."

From this it is clear that:

Either José María Linan was shot, as Queipo de Llano alleges, before the entry of the Nationalist troops into Lora del Rio, in which case he could not have taken to Queipo de Llano the report on which the incident in the Burgos Book is based, or

José María Linan was not shot and General Queipo de Llano was labouring under a misapprehension.

That the fictitious story of the murder of a man should be described with such a wealth of picturesque and sanguinary detail is a further proof of the General's admirable powers of imagination.

One further example:

In his interview with Raymond Lacoste in the "Echo de Paris" of August 27th, Queipo de Llano declared:

"In Puente Genil 900 persons were massacred by the reds. . . ."

In the chapter of the Burgos Book headed "Puente Genil", on page 59, it is stated:

"One hundred and fifty-four citizens were murdered here. . . ."

The discrepancies in these "authentic", "trustworthy", "documented and verified accounts" on which the rebel propaganda is based amount here to some 600 per cent.

These two examples should suffice. I have not been attempting to prove that no atrocities whatever were committed in the villages mentioned. I am convinced that things were bad enough, for the period we are dealing with was the first few days after the outbreak of the insurrection. I have merely been trying to show that the allegations of the rebel propagandists are exaggerated, contradictory and unreliable.

3. SENSATIONAL PROPAGANDA

Newspaper reports in which the writers glorify the warlike deeds of their own side with the definite aim of pandering to the lowest instincts of their readers, constitute in themselves a special chapter in the annals of atrocity propaganda. During the years of the Great War we were all privileged to wallow in the effusions of this repulsive form of art. To-day its highest exponents are the German war correspondents in Spain. Their task is quite obviously to prepare the appetite of the reading public for the coming world war. I quote here a typical example:

"Typical of the Legion"

". . . Here comes along from one of the villages an honest rustic with his shopping basket. 'What have you got in that basket?' asks the Legionary. 'Eggs.' 'Show 'em here!' Crash go the eggs on the pavement, followed by the gleam of a pistol. The 'rustic' runs, runs for his life, and even a Spaniard knows how to show a clean pair of heels! When he is ten metres away, two pistol shots ring out—hit in the head twice—that's over! . . .

". . . To conclude, here is the story of Sergeant Jaime Petrus Borrás, who has been a Legionary from

the beginning, but now serves in the Villa Sanjurjo Regiment of Riff Chasseurs. The regiment had to storm the village of Sessena near Aranjuez house by house, or rather, courtyard by courtyard, and on one occasion, while his Moors were at work with rifles, knives and hand grenades, the worthy sergeant stood looking about him in one of the side streets. Suddenly a door flies open on the opposite side of the street. A Communist, rifle in hand, appears in the doorway. Jaime Petrus draws his service revolver. And—bang! the Communist bites the dust. But in his place stands another, also in a great hurry to get out of the house. Bang!—and he too bites the dust. In all the sergeant has fired seven times from the same spot; then comes the first Moor, somewhat glum at finding that his 'sargento' has dispatched all the Communists by himself. More than anything typical of the Legion is the fact that after this display of marksmanship the sergeant actually had two cartridges left in his nine-chambered revolver. Seven shots—seven Communists! He told me this himself on his word of honour when I photographed him—and a Legionary never lies. On the next day Sergeant Jaime Petrus Borrás was made a sergeant-major."¹

The deliberate attempt to evoke sadistic mass instincts is here unmistakable. Even more abominable, if possible, is the exploitation of the sexual instinct. The following fantastic report, dated from Madrid, appeared on the front page of the "Berliner Nachtausgabe" on November 4th, 1936.

". . . The Militia issues vouchers to the value of one peseta. Each note is good for one rape. The results cannot be described. It is impossible for respectable women to walk in the streets, for if they do so they

¹ "National-Zeitung," Essen, November 22nd, 1936.

are immediately dragged into the barracks and violated. The widow of a high official was found dead in her flat. *By her bedside lay sixty-four of these vouchers."*

The author is prepared to swear, and presumably all English and French correspondents in Spain, whether of the Left or the Right, are also prepared to do so, that on November 4th, 1936, there was no correspondent of the "Berliner Nachtausgabe" in Madrid, and that incidents such as the one described above never took place and never could take place, and are base and absurd slanders.

But unfortunately it is not a question of an isolated phenomenon, of the spontaneous product of a disordered and pathological imagination. The old wives' tale of the vouchers issued as rewards for the violating of women is almost as old as the classic atrocity stories of the "Elders of Zion", of polluted wells and so forth. We find it in the propaganda against Russia in the time of Kerensky, even before Russia was Bolshevik; it went the rounds in justification of the *White Terror in Hungary, Bavaria and Central Germany*, it was unearthed from its naphthaline wrappings during Gil Robles' campaign in Asturias and was for a time the favourite theme of General Queipo de Llano.

4. WHITEWASHING PROPAGANDA

Badajoz, Toledo, Malaga, Durango, Guernica, are bloody milestones on Franco's path. Blunted as are the sensibilities of the world to-day, it has not forgotten these terrible massacres. Franco's propagandists found themselves faced with the thankless task of raising the dead to life and covering the blood they had spilt with printer's ink.

I shall here quote two typical examples of the rebels' "whitewashing" propaganda.

Let us take our first example from the Burgos Book. It concerns an earlier period, in Asturias. Let me remind the reader of the facts disclosed in Chapter II regarding

the reprisals taken by the Gil Robles-Lerroux Government in Asturias, which led to world-wide protests.

On page 21 of this book this most bloody of all post-war episodes in Spain up to the time of Civil War is dismissed as follows:

"This revolt was only half-heartedly punished; two insignificant individuals were shot, a few men and women were imprisoned for a time, but all the real leaders escaped."

Two pages further on, on page 23, it is stated that one of the consequences of the victory of the People's Front was that:

"An amnesty was granted to all those political prisoners implicated in the Asturias revolt of 1934."

Are we expected to believe that, if it were only a matter of a few men and women, a political amnesty had to be declared?

A few men and women! There were forty thousand of them.

A further example of rebel whitewashing propaganda is furnished in a pamphlet entitled "The Legend of Badajoz," published by Burns, Oates and Washburn, Ltd., London, in which Major Geoffrey McNeill Moss attempts to question the authenticity of the reports with regard to the terrible massacre of Badajoz. I cannot here go fully into the contents of the pamphlet and will confine myself to the main argument.

The now classic story of the blood bath of Badajoz came from the pens of two distinguished Right-wing French journalists, Jacques Derthet of the "Temps" and Marcel Dany of the Havas Agency.

They were the first journalists to enter Badajoz on August 15th, twenty-four hours after the rebels had entered the

town. They went there accompanied by Mario Neves, a Portuguese journalist.

Major Geoffrey McNeill Moss quotes the reports of the two French journalists with regard to the horrors they witnessed. Then he quotes a message from the Portuguese journalist, which gives a much more anaemic description of the events that took place. This is the main argument adduced by Major McNeill Moss to cast doubts on the genuineness of the French journalists' reports.

The whole thing has a pretty plausible ring about it, and most readers may well overlook one small and apparently unimportant detail. Namely, that Major Geoffrey McNeill Moss, when quoting the French journalists, gives the exact dates when their reports appeared and the names of their newspapers, but in quoting the Portuguese journalist neglects to mention either.

Through a fortunate chance I am in a position to supply the missing dates. I visited Portugal during those days of August and brought a pile of newspapers away with me. Mario Neves's articles appeared on August 15th and 16th in the Lisbon evening paper "Diario de Lisboa". I have a copy of them in my files.

For Mario Neves's report appeared in two instalments. The first article really does not contain all the facts mentioned by the French journalists. It is this first article that Major McNeill Moss has used to brand the French journalists as unreliable. But the second article mentions facts of a degree of horror that not only confirms, but even surpasses the messages of the Frenchmen. As to the existence of this second article Major McNeill Moss says not a word.¹

¹ Here are a few quotations from the second article by Mario Neves, the Portuguese journalist, whom Major Geoffrey McNeill Moss brings forward as his chief witness in support of his assertion that *no* massacre took place in Badajoz:

"Since yesterday (this was written on the 16th, two days after the fall of Badajoz) several hundred people have lost their lives in Badajoz. It is impossible to bury them all, there is no time for that.

" . . . In the courtyard near the stables many corpses are still to be seen

Intention to deceive is the last thing I would impute to Major McNeill Moss; and I can only suppose that he has been led astray. The rebel propagandists who foisted the material on him have used him to play an infamous trick. The infamy consists in their having banked on the assumption that no one in England would be likely to read Portuguese newspapers. To make assurance doubly sure, they omitted to quote the name and date of the newspaper.

The World War has impressed on the consciousness of all politicians the pre-eminent importance of propaganda, but it has been left to the modern Dictator States to develop it systematically into a science. Germany and Italy, by setting up special Ministries of Propaganda have officially recognized propaganda as an integral part of the machinery of State. The discovery, worked out in the most minute detail, of the Communist plan of revolt and the Communist "complicity" in the burning of the Reichstag is one of the major achievements of modern propaganda; likewise the Italian propaganda campaign against Abyssinia, in which the aggressors were represented as the attacked and the war as a campaign of pacification. Both these examples illustrate the latest fashion in modern propaganda; here the circumstances are no longer, as in former times, glossed over, touched up and lightly falsified; the facts themselves are inverted.

lying about, the result of implacable military justice. Among them I saw the corpse of Alférez Benito Méndez. His corpse is still wrapped in the white sheet in which he was brought from his sick bed in hospital.

" . . . In the main streets one no longer sees, as one did this morning, unburied corpses lying about. The people who accompany us ('us' means Neves, Derthet and Dany) tell us that the Foreign Legionaries and Moorish troops, who are entrusted with the carrying out of the executions, wish the corpses to be left lying in the streets for a few hours to serve as an example and attain the desired effect.

"They also tell us that the selection of prisoners who are to suffer the death penalty is made after an examination of the skin. Those who have a blue mark on the shoulder which suggests long use of a rifle, may consider themselves definitely lost. . . ."

The German and Italian dictatorships have, in addition to giving direct military assistance to the rebels, also supplied them with propaganda models and propaganda experts. Franco's very first pronouncement on July 18th bears the stamp of these new propaganda methods; the instigator of the rebellion charges the legal Government to "cease the unnecessary bloodshed", the man who has plunged his country into Civil War reproaches the Government with "exposing innocent women and children to danger and death", and threatens to call it, the legal Government, "to account for its actions".

All the subsequent propaganda of the rebels takes the same line. The rebels, even before the insurrection, in *statu nascendi*, as it were, obtain arms from Germany—and have the temerity to allege that France has broken the Non-Intervention Pact; they install machine-guns in the churches, and maintain that their opponents have desecrated the churches; with their air squadrons they set Madrid and Guernica on fire—and allege that the Anarchists have burned Madrid and Guernica. Militiamen who have been defending the legal Government and are taken prisoner by the insurgents, are formally accused, before being shot, of fomenting a "military rebellion". In the rebel Press the Burgos Junta has from the outset been alluded to as the legal Government of the country and the Government troops as rebels. A more direct reversal of the facts would be impossible.

The Spanish War is for the dictatorships in many respects a dress rehearsal for the world war for which it is preparing the way; it is so, alas, in the matter of propaganda. The laying of the responsibility for the Civil War at the door of their opponents, the designation of a war of aggression as a retaliatory measure, the representing of acts of arson as the extinguishing of fires, of declarations of war as offers of peace—this is how the coming world war is being prepared.

CHAPTER VII

THE HEROES OF THE ALCÁZAR

"They called themselves the successors of the Cid. They hid themselves from the people's wrath behind the skirts of the women they had ravished and the swaddling-clothes of the children they had kidnapped".¹

ON JULY 18TH, 1936, the military insurrection broke out in Toledo. The leader of the mutinous troops was Colonel Moscardo, Commandant of the garrison quartered in the Alcázar.

For three days there was fighting in the streets of Toledo, and by July 22nd the Government troops and workers' militia had gained control of the city. The mutineers retreated into the Alcázar, and the siege began.

The Madrid Government was at first inclined not to attach much importance to the whole episode. The Commander of the Government troops in the Toledo district, General Riquelme, rang up Moscardo in the Alcázar—for the telephone line between the Alcázar and the town had remained undamaged, and was yet to play an extremely strange part in the whole affair. General Riquelme urged Colonel Moscardo not to persist in his folly, but to surrender while there was yet time. After all, they were not living in the Middle Ages; they were not robber barons defending their fortresses.

Moscardo replied that he had enough ammunition to hold the Alcázar until the rebellion had triumphed throughout Spain.

"But we can blow the whole Alcázar to smithereens," retorted Riquelme, still amused rather than bellicose. He

¹ Ilya Ehrenburg, "Toledo".

could not bring himself to believe that a high and responsible officer should, in the twentieth century, embark upon the crazy adventure of defending an Arab fortress against modern artillery and aircraft. Not until the end of their brief conversation did the true state of affairs dawn upon him. Just before hanging up the receiver, Colonel Moscardo remarked casually:

“Your women, by the way, send their love to you.”

On the evening of that same day, when the workers' Militiamen at last returned to their homes after three days of street fighting, news spread like wildfire round the town that on the night of the 21st the rebels had seized the women and children in all parts of the town occupied by them—these were preponderantly working-class districts—and had carried them off to the Alcázar.

During the next two months the world followed with breathless interest the events that were being played out round the Alcázar of Toledo. It imagined that it was the spectator of an heroic saga of modern times, whereas the drama that was being enacted before its eyes was one of the most preposterous gangsters' exploits of our day. The kidnapers of women and children were elevated to the status of legendary heroes, and the “Cadets of the Alcázar” became a symbol of the national uprising. In actual fact the technique of modern propaganda has seldom before reached such supreme heights.

History has from time immemorial exhibited a tendency towards the creation of myths; jingo historians have always consciously and adroitly exploited the masses' craving for legends. One has only to bear in mind the canonization of adventurers like Schlageter and Horst Wessel. The history of the siege of the Alcázar, which, fortunately, it is still possible to reconstruct in all its details—in a year or two this would no longer be the case, and the actual facts would

be shrouded for ever in the mists of legend—provides one of the rare opportunities of catching the distorters of history and manufacturers of myths *in flagrante delicto*.

Here follows the sworn statement of Antonia Pérez Corroto, tavern-keeper, formerly residing at 6 Calle de las Sierpes, Toledo, who was carried off as a hostage to the Alcázar, but managed to escape on the tenth day of the siege:

“Until nearly midday on the Tuesday after the outbreak of the insurrection, things were comparatively quiet in Toledo. On the evening of that day the rebels resumed the fighting and were defeated at every point, even in their strongest positions. On Wednesday the Nationalists, driven into a tight corner, resolved to retreat into the Alcázar. Fifty rebels, under the command of a Captain, broke into the houses and carried off women who were peacefully going about their household tasks.

“At noon on the Wednesday I myself was in my tavern, when several Fascists in civilian clothes entered and ordered me to hand over to them all the food I had in the place. There was nothing for it but to obey. ‘You'll find food for us all right,’ said an officer with a sneer. And I, my daughter and my two little ones, aged three years and thirteen months respectively, were driven out of the bar.

“We were taken to the Alcázar. We asked what it all meant, but received no answer. We thought that possibly there was some question of safety precautions or evacuation or something of that kind. We could none of us make out what was really happening.

“As we were led into the courtyard of the fortress, Government aeroplanes flew over it. An officer of the Civil Guard ordered us to go down into the cellars. Down there everything was in darkness. I asked an officer's wife for some water for my children ‘There's

no water here for you,' she answered. 'But a piece of bread . . .' I begged. 'There's no bread for you,' she said. They tried to humiliate us from the very first day. On the following day food was rationed out to us. The Alcázar was full of Fascists from Toledo: there were over eight hundred Civil Guards, two hundred officers and Cadets, two hundred Fascists in civilian clothes and Phalangists, and nearly four hundred women and children, including the hostages. That same day we were put in chains. My daughter was so terrified that she was unable to eat. It was terrible to see her. The officers ate a kind of coarse black bread. I asked to be allowed to speak to the rebel leader. I was taken to him. 'You're one of those people who are always complaining, aren't you?' 'No, I am a poor mother whose daughter is at the point of death. Let me out. I am entirely innocent.' 'No one will get out of here as long as I am alive,' replied the rebel leader. I sank to the ground, weeping, and they had to drag me out of his room.

"I was imprisoned in the Alcázar for ten days. Every morning my daughter and I were allowed to take a quarter of an hour's walk in the inner courtyard where there were great piles of dead horses, which gave out a horrible stench. There were several soldiers and Civil Guards in the Alcázar who, when the supply of fresh horse-flesh gave out, began to eat the carrion. Several of them died as a result.

"The rebel officers organised the defence of the fortress. Three times a day the guards were changed in the towers, from which an incessant machine-gun fire was kept up. The Civil Guards used rifles. Fascists in civilian clothes went round the fortress and marched off anyone who talked of surrender. I believe they afterwards shot them. Twice a day we were given a meal, one at midday and the other at six in the evening; we had to queue up for them. By the sixth day the only food left

was potatoes and lentils. On the day of our escape we had eaten nothing but a morsel of roasted horse-flesh and a handful of ground corn. The water was polluted. Dysentery broke out. Every evening typewritten news-sheets were distributed among the rebels, in which it was reported that the relief of the Alcázar was at hand, that Madrid was occupied by the rebels, and so on.

"On the tenth day of our imprisonment I came across a gunsmith whom I knew very well, and who had been duped by the rebels, like many others who were there. That evening he had a word with the Civil Guard on duty, and showed him an order signed by the Lieutenant-Colonel; the signature had been forged. The guard looked at the paper, hesitated for a moment, and then led me and my daughter to the Santa Fé Gate, which leads out to the Carmen Hill. When we got there, the gunsmith said to me: 'Now go, and be as quick as you can. I have risked my head; I only hope it's some use to you.' My daughter carried one child in her arms and I the other. Shots rang out; it was the Militiamen shooting. I can't remember anything else, for I fell down in a dead faint."

It is by no mere accident that the Cadets have played an outstanding rôle in the legend of the Alcázar, that the rebel propaganda has thrust them again and again into the foreground and deliberately created the catchword, "The Cadets of the Alcázar". The term "Cadets" appeals to certain traditional conceptions of youthful heroism, to the romantic ideas associated with the barrack-square and to the man-in-the-street's worship of uniform. An aura of feudalism, moreover, attaches to the idea of a Cadet; these youthful, elegant boys, pluckily defending their fortress against a horde of "reds"—this picture has the precise oleograph associations that the rebels wished to convey to the world. Yet everything connected with the

legend of the Alcázar is a fabrication, even the assertion that it was the Cadets who defended the fortress.

The plain unvarnished truth is that several weeks before the July insurrection the Cadets had been transferred from the Alcázar as a disciplinary measure. The provocative behaviour of these pampered sons of officers and gentlemen had long made them detested in Toledo; and when at the end of May some drunken Cadets started a brawl in the town and assaulted the sellers of workers' newspapers, all the Cadets were transferred from the Alcázar to the Campo de Alijares on the orders of Casares Quiroga, the Minister of War. Shortly afterwards, moreover, their holidays had begun, and they had broken up and left Toledo. Thus, when the July insurrection broke out, the Cadet School was deserted and empty.

How many authentic Cadets, then, were to be found among the legendary "Cadets of the Alcázar"? Only five can really be proved to have been there, namely Cadet Jaime Milán del Bosch and four of his comrades, who, on the outbreak of the rebellion on July 18th, took train from Madrid to Toledo to place their services at the disposal of Colonel Moscardo. This is the only concrete information that the defenders of the Alcázar gave to the Press after their relief. In the report in the "Temps" of September 29th, 1936, it was further stated that Bosch and his companions "found", on their arrival in Toledo, "several other Cadets who had arrived there the same evening". Let us be very generous and assume that another twenty Cadets succeeded in reaching Toledo from the furthest corners of Spain in the middle of a rebellion and a general strike. Even according to this optimistic estimate, the number of Cadets in the Alcázar would amount to exactly two per cent of the garrison. This is precisely why, after the fall of Toledo, the rebels, whilst describing the siege in the most picturesque detail, and, so as to lighten the task of the historian, giving the most precise figures with

regard to the supplies of food and so on, maintained complete silence as to the composition of their forces. Posterity was to know that there were in the Alcázar 250 mules, 19 horses, amongst them one thoroughbred, 250 sacks of corn, each weighing 50 to 100 kilograms, and 3 cisterns, each containing 300,000 litres of water. An astonished world was presented, in addition, with an exact statistical statement of the number and weight of the projectiles that fell in the Alcázar—only with regard to the human beings was no word said.

One thing is certain, and that is that the actual garrison of the fortress was 1,100 strong, of which number about 650 were Civil Guards, about 150 legionaries of the 14 Tercio from Madrid, and about 300 officers and Phalangists. All accounts agree, however, that the number of women and children amounted to 400 in all, of whom 250 were hostages.

The story of the siege of the Alcázar is primarily a sordid story of blackmail. For thirty-four days the besiegers were unable to make up their minds to train their artillery on the fortress. The first shell from a 4-inch gun was fired on August 24th, the thirty-fourth day after the occupation of the Alcázar . . . after all attempts to persuade the rebels to allow the women and children to leave the fortress had failed.

Even now the Republicans did not bombard the fortress itself, but only the adjacent buildings, with the object of isolating the besieged garrison. It was not until eight days later that the first shell was fired at the outer walls. Even during the last few days of the tragedy, at a time when Toledo was already being threatened by rebel troops and the besiegers blew up the south-west tower with dynamite, the inner courtyards and cellars of the Alcázar, in which the women and children were housed, remained undamaged; and when, after a siege that had lasted seventy days, Toledo fell, and the rebels of the Alcázar were relieved by their

allies, they were only able to show a total death roll of 83—83 out of 1,500!—and not a single woman among them. In other words, the besiegers, despite the aircraft and 6-inch guns at their disposal, confined their bombardment right to the very end to the outer walls, the towers and terraces, and never made a really serious attempt to blow the Alcázar to pieces in the way in which, for example, Guernica was blown to pieces. The 400 women and children, behind whose moral protection the heroes of the Alcázar had crept, made a serious siege impossible. I was shown photographs of these women and children posted up in one of the militiamen's barracks. Above them was the caption:

“Be careful of them; they are our women, our children.”

Moscardo and his garrison played to the world the rôles of heroic defenders of a fortress, while the Militiamen ground their teeth in impotent rage behind their barricades of mattresses, and in their fury fired off their rifles at the stone walls.

The barricades of the loyal forces were situated fifty, forty and sometimes only twenty yards or so from the walls of the fortress. Round about ten o'clock in the morning the shooting, which was more or less ineffective on both sides, usually began. In the intervals there was an exchange of curses and abusive epithets; and then there would be more shooting. From two to four in the afternoon, in accordance with a tacit agreement, there was generally a pause for the midday siesta—by no means an isolated phenomenon on the various Spanish fronts. Again and again, when officers of the Government forces went to the Alcázar to parley with the enemy and there was an armistice of several hours' duration, the Militiamen would approach the walls and distribute cigarettes among the Civil Guards, who had run out of tobacco. One may be tempted to smile at such episodes, but they ought rather to bring home to one the profound tragedy of an excessively good-natured people which has had a fratricidal war forced upon it by a small clique of landowners and officers lusting for power. And

behind the grand opera façade of the Alcázar was concealed the odious crime of holding 400 women and children prisoner.

It would be unfair to saddle Colonel Moscardo with the sole responsibility for this gangsters' exploit. He was merely acting on instructions from higher quarters, obeying the orders of the rebel High Command. On September 21st the Intelligence Service of the Madrid Government intercepted a message in cipher broadcast by the Burgos Junta to Colonel Moscardo, in which the latter was instructed on no account to release the women and children from the Alcázar, but on the contrary to expose them to the full view of the enemy. Moscardo's fellow-officer, Colonel Aranda, took up exactly the same attitude in the case of the siege of Oviedo, likewise on the orders of Burgos. He too was requested by the Madrid Government to allow the women and children to leave Oviedo, regardless of whether they were members of rebel or loyal families. He too sternly refused.

In all these cases we are confronted with a deliberate policy on the part of the Burgos authorities. The refusal to evacuate women and children serves a double purpose: it paralyses the besiegers' powers of offensive, and at the same time provides the rebels with the most marvellous opportunities of pillorying the barbarism of the “Reds”, who, they allege, do not even shrink from the murder of women and children.

Four largish towns in the possession of the Government, apart from Madrid, have had to withstand a fairly lengthy siege in the course of the Spanish Civil War: San Sebastian, Irun, Bilbao and Santander. In all four cases the civilian population, including political prisoners, was partially evacuated the moment a state of siege was declared.

On the other hand, four largish places in possession of the rebels have been besieged by Government troops: Saragossa, Huesca, Oviedo and the Alcázar of Toledo. In all four cases the rebels refused to evacuate the women, children and hostages.

The Madrid Government has been unable from the outset to compete with Franco's methods of "totalitarian warfare".

From a purely military standpoint humanitarianism is always a drawback. It was because of the humane standpoint of the Madrid Government, because of its hesitation to lay serious siege to the Alcázar until it was too late,—and also because of the inexperience and poor discipline of the Militia—that Toledo was lost by the Government troops.

The official reason given by Moscardo for his behaviour was that the women themselves refused to leave the Alcázar.

Even Moscardo did not go so far as to allege that the children refused to leave, for they were not the children of the men and women in the Alcázar; amongst Moscardo's hostages there were about 150 eight- to ten-year-old pupils of a military academy, whose parents lived far away from Toledo and whom Moscardo had carried off to the inferno of the Alcázar.

And above all one woman was missing from the Alcázar—the wife of Colonel Moscardo himself. She was in Toledo when the rebellion broke out, and the Republican authorities gave her complete freedom of choice either to join her husband in the Alcázar or to be taken to Madrid. Señora Moscardo, and with her the wives of seven other officers who were in the Alcázar, chose to be taken to Madrid. No one went voluntarily into the Alcázar, not even the wife of its Commandant. And yet that same Commandant had the face to declare publicly that the women refused to leave the Alcázar.

The siege had not lasted many days before desertions began to occur. Corporal Félix de Ancó Morales availed himself of a night sortie on August 12th to go over to the Government troops with ten Civil Guards.

"Not a day passed without malcontents being shot," related one of the fugitives. "The corpses were buried under the riding school. There were even attempts at mutiny, but they were nipped in the bud."

At the end of August two other Civil Guards, Francisco Tirado Ramos, and his friend, Luis Ortega López, succeeded in escaping. They made the following statements to the Press:

Question: Why did you want to escape?

Luis Ortega López: Because I knew that two of my brothers were members of the Socialist Party and were sure to be fighting on the side of the Government. I refuse to fight against my own kith and kin.

Question: What is the general feeling amongst the rest of the troops in the Alcázar?

Francisco Turado Ramos: The majority of them would have escaped if they had not been held back by the fear of being caught and shot by their officers. I don't know exactly how many of those inside were shot but it was a good number.

Question: How many have escaped altogether?

Answer: Fifty or sixty. Most of them got away by crawling along the sewer. Later on the entrance to the sewer was guarded.

Question: Why did the women refuse to leave when the Government offered them safe conduct?

Answer: They did not refuse. The majority wanted to leave, and of course all the prisoners. But they knew nothing whatever of the negotiations. The officers made all decisions without consulting anyone."

On August 15th the Special Correspondent of the conservative "Petit Parisien" telegraphed from Toledo:

"On the first day of the insurrection the officers and Cadets of the Alcázar attempted to gain possession of

the town. Their attempt failed, and they were obliged to retreat into the Alcázar. But they took hostages with them: dignitaries of the town and unsuspecting passers-by, among them women and children. They attempted also to make two or three sorties, which were unsuccessful, but which gave them an opportunity of carrying off further hostages into the fortress.

"Crouching back against a rampart I listened to the story of one of the escaped soldiers (this was one of the ten Civil Guards who escaped on August 12th with Corporal Morales, A.K.) giving an account of the horrors that were taking place behind those threatening, inaccessible walls.

"He was quite a young fellow with a face that was unnaturally pale and haggard; the terror which he had experienced still lurked in the corners of his eyes. He seemed to find it difficult to talk. At first he tried to clear himself. 'They duped us,' he declared, 'by telling us that we were going to defend the Republic against the Anarchists, who were destroying everything. When the officers saw that we no longer believed them they locked us in the riding school. There was a terrible stench there, because about thirty corpses had been buried under the ring.'

"'What kind of corpses?'

"'It's impossible to say. We simply heard shots as you do when there's an execution. Perhaps, too, some of the children died; a number of them were ill. And then there were the carcasses of horses that had died and the remains of the horses that were killed every day for good. . . . But the most terrible thing of all was the shrieking of the women, the crying and whimpering of the children. They were locked in the cellars because of the aeroplanes. But you could hear them, hear them, hear them all the time. . . .'

"And he pressed both hands to his ears just as he must have done when he was in there.

" . . . there was one of them who went mad. She howled the whole time like a dog baying at the moon. Then there was another, they said, the wife of an officer, who tried to shoot her husband with a revolver. What ghastly fear they endured! And all those little ones! A child was born there one day, in that hole of a cellar. There are things that should not be allowed to happen. . . .'"

Behind the heroic opera façade hell hid its face. Conditions grew worse and worse from day to day in the Alcázar; the besieged human beings within its walls lived on a ration of horse-flesh, black bread made of bran, and a litre of putrid water from the cisterns per head per day. Two new-born babies first saw the darkness of the world in the subterranean vault beneath the Alcázar; three women went mad; three committed suicide. The officers and Phalangists shot down anyone who dared to protest against the mad folly of this adventure; horror, madness stalked the fortress. On August 9th, Zara González, a fourteen-year-old kitchen-maid, crawled through the sewer into the town, where she collapsed unconscious in a pool of blood; in the hospital she was just able, before losing consciousness again, to make a deposition to the effect that she had been violated by eight or nine officers in the Alcázar. Four days later she was dead.

And the world goes on extolling the heroes of the Alcázar.

Early in September the rebel offensive against Talavera de la Reina, scarcely thirty kilometres west of Toledo, began. The Alcázar, hitherto of secondary strategic importance, now became a real danger; it was high time for the Madrid Government to settle accounts with the enemy in the rear. But the thought of the hostages, the 400 women and children, paralysed the besiegers' strength of will, exactly as Burgos had foreseen.

On September 8th at one o'clock in the morning, Barcelo, the Commandant of the Government troops, rang up Colonel Moscardo, for the telephone still functioned, and requested him to receive an officer whom he was sending to parley with him. The officer proposed for this purpose was Colonel Rojo, former instructor at the Military Academy of Toledo and an old Republican officer who was held in universal respect and esteem.

Moscardo agreed over the telephone to receive Colonel Rojo as a mediator at ten o'clock the next day.

At ten o'clock the order to cease fire was given; two rebel officers received Colonel Rojo at the entrance to the fortress, blindfolded him, and conducted him into the interior of the Alcázar. Two hours later he re-appeared, deathly pale, and was conducted by the Militiamen, who did not dare to question him, to military headquarters.

"They refused," declared Rojo. "I entreated them at least to let the women and children go, but they would not hear of it. I pleaded with them for two hours. To no purpose. . . . They declared that they would all die and that the women and children would die with them, and that if they had their way they would drag the whole world into perdition with them."

Three days later, on September 12th, Talavera de la Reina fell. Toledo was now directly threatened by the rebel army. The Government had all the women and children evacuated from the town. They then sent for miners from Asturias, experts in the laying of dynamite charges, to blow up the outer fortifications of the Alcázar. But before making up their minds to proceed with this step in earnest, they made one final attempt, precious though every hour now was, to bring the "heroes of the Alcázar" to their senses. They sent for Don Enrique Vázquez Camarasa, a Canon of the Madrid Cathedral,

who had been reported dead three times by the rebels—once burnt alive by the Communists, twice crucified by the Anarchists—to come to Toledo.

The Abbé Camarasa arrived by car in Toledo at 11 a.m., and after a short parley was admitted into the Alcázar. An hour later he returned, alone, his crucifix in his right hand, a sack containing utensils for the celebrations of Mass in his left. He had baptised the new-born infants, performed the last rites over the dead, and obtained from the rebels a promise that within twenty-four hours they would reconsider their decision as to the fate of the women and children.

Twenty-four hours is a long time in such circumstances, but the Government of Madrid was patient, perhaps too patient. And its patience was rewarded: an hour before the expiry of the time limit Colonel Moscardo communicated his answer, which consisted of one single sentence:

"No one shall leave this place."

And still the Government's patience was not exhausted. On September 13th the Prime Minister, Largo Caballero, in a personal interview, requested the Chilean Ambassador, Núñez Morgado, doyen of the diplomatic corps in Madrid, for his intervention.

The Ambassador travelled to Toledo immediately. He arranged with the local military authorities that the women, children and other civilians, in the event of their being released by the rebels, should be housed in two deserted monasteries, which should be placed under the protection of the diplomatic corps, and be declared extra-territorial by the hoisting over them of the Chilean flag.

In view of so concrete an offer the Chilean Ambassador had no further doubts as to the success of his intervention with the besieged troops.

Even Colonel Moscardo realised that the rejection of this offer would put him in the wrong in the eyes of the whole world. He hit upon a way out; and that was to

refuse to receive the Chilean Ambassador, justifying his behaviour in the following statement:

“If the Chilean Ambassador wants anything of us, let him get into touch with our Government in Burgos through his own Government.”

The kindly reader who has followed us thus far will at this point feel certain doubts arise in his mind. He will say to himself that it is simply not possible that he has been deceived in such a preposterous way with regard to the real truth about the “heroes of the Alcázar”. In order to avoid any possibility of misunderstanding, let us therefore, to conclude our account of this incredible episode, reproduce here the statement made by the Chilean Ambassador to the Press after the failure of his mission. It runs as follows:

“The Chilean Ambassador and *ad interim* doyen of the diplomatic corps in Madrid considers it of importance to make known the following facts in connection with his visit to Toledo: He declares:

“1. That his proposal to the force besieged in the Alcázar was confined to the question of facilitating the evacuation of the women and children, whom it was proposed to accommodate in Madrid and place under the protection of the diplomatic corps.

“2. That inasmuch as it proved impossible for the Ambassador to convey this offer in person, it was communicated on the night of Saturday to the besieged garrison by Colonel Barcelo, Commandant of the Government troops in Toledo. Colonel Barcelo telephoned to the Chilean Ambassador in Madrid at a later hour and informed him of the negative result of his mission. The Chilean Ambassador wishes to affirm that he took this step on his own initiative and on purely humanitarian

grounds, and that any other version of the incident must be designated as unauthorised.”

All this took place on September 14th.

On September 18th the first mine was exploded beneath the Alcázar, destroying the south-west tower. But the breach thus caused in the fortifications was insufficient. The inner walls and the ruins still afforded the rebels adequate protection; they were, besides, able to retire to the underground vaults of the citadel, which were hewn out of granite rock and which could only have been destroyed by a systematic bombardment by heavy artillery. And still the Government hesitated; hesitated for the space of a whole week, until 4 a.m. on September 25th, before giving the order for the second mine to be exploded. But now it was too late. On the next day, September 26th, Franco's advance guard reached Toledo, and on September 27th, the town fell before the technically superior forces of the rebel army.

In the street fighting of September 27th the Government troops lost 900 men. The number of men and women prisoners shot during the next three days has been estimated at 2,000.

The garrison of the Alcázar had suffered, after a “barbarous” siege of sixty-seven days, a loss of exactly eighty-three dead!

The first act on the part of the liberated heroes of the Alcázar was to go the rounds of the hospitals of Toledo and finish off the wounded Militiamen in their beds with hand grenades and bayonets.

The Archbishop of Toledo sent them his blessing from Pamplona.

General Francisco Franco conferred on Colonel Moscardo the laurel crown of the Order of St. Ferdinand.

Hitler's representative sent him a congratulatory telegram.

Nothing more was heard of the fate of the women and children hostages in the Alcázar.

DERNIÈRE ÉDITION 
Petit Parisien
 LE PLUS LU DES JOURNAUX DU MONDE ENTIER
 GENÈVE - PARIS - TÉLÉPHONE 1 PROVENCE 45-21 à 45-26 - INTER-PROVENCE 50 à 55 - CHEQUE POSTAL 538



INTERVIEW DE FRANCO Les "
 di
CHEF DE L'INSURRECTION me

**— Je ne bombarderai à
 jamais Madrid...
 il y a des innocents.**

CHAPTER VIII

MADRID

THE NAME "MADRID" marks the beginning of a new and very problematical epoch in world history. Madrid was the first European capital to be subjected to aerial bombardment on a large scale. The capital of Spain served, so to speak, as an experiment in vivisection for the next war.

It is true that in the war of 1914-18 Zeppelin raids were made on London and Paris. But they were mere child's play in comparison with what can be done now in the light of subsequent developments in aerial warfare.

It is true that there were aeroplanes in the war of 1914-18. Their pilots performed knightly deeds of derring-do and fought romantic battles in the air in which five or seven machines, at the most, participated. When one compares these thrilling combats with the battles between whole fleets of planes, such as took place in the summer of 1937 over Madrid, the airmen of the World War seem almost as romantic and remote as the Knights of the Round Table.

In order to record with the greatest possible exactitude the effect of the experiments in modern aerial warfare tried out on Madrid, I shall take as a basis a specified period of four weeks.

The following is, so far as circumstances permit, an exact chronological record of the period from October 24th to November 20th, 1936.

On August 16th the Commander-in-Chief of the rebel forces, General Francisco Franco, declared to the correspondent of the "Petit Parisien":

"I shall never bombard Madrid—there are innocent people living there whom I have no wish to expose to danger."

Thirteen days later, on August 29th, Franco's airmen hurled their first bombs on Madrid.

They tore two enormous holes in the garden of the War Ministry, scarcely twenty yards from the wing which housed the General Staff, stove in the roof of a garage in the Calle María Rosa de Luna, destroyed eight motor cars and wounded three people. The last bomb exploded in a public park in the west of Madrid without causing any damage.

During the next few days the people of Madrid organized air-raid precautions, and cleared cellars to serve as shelters. Every second house bore a notice: "Shelter for X persons." Posters appeared in the streets instructing the inhabitants to betake themselves to cellars or underground stations immediately the alarm siren was sounded. Anti-aircraft defence drill was instituted, to the great joy of the school-children, and the annoyance of the teachers.

The civilian population did not take the whole thing very seriously. For years they had seen in cinemas, newspapers and anti-war pamphlets descriptions of the coming war in the air, in which towns collapsed like card-houses, children playing in the streets were blown to bits by bombs, and babes at the breast died in their mother's arms. But all this was just "the films" or "Pacifist propaganda", which was

accepted with a slightly shocked shake of the head; that the same thing could happen in reality was beyond their powers of imagination and was therefore not believed.

The people of Madrid had two months after that first bombardment in which to forget their fright. Then on October 23rd, at 9 o'clock in the morning, the first attack by a German Junker squadron was made over the capital of the Spanish Republic. The particular objective of the rebel leaders was the North Station. Little real damage was done and only a small number of civilians were wounded.

During the course of October 24th twelve bombs were dropped; in the neighbourhood of the North Station, in the vicinity of the city gas-works, and over the suburb of Getafe. Two women standing at the door of a baker's shop were killed and five people severely injured.

On October 30th, at 5 o'clock in the afternoon, the general air and land offensive against Madrid began.

FOUR WEEKS OF HELL

It was shortly before dusk. Chattering crowds thronged the Puerta del Sol, Madrid's Forum; in the narrow streets of the working-class districts children played in the afternoon sun. Women stood in queues at the doors of bakers' shops and dairies, for there was already a shortage of provisions. Schools in Madrid close at 5 o'clock, and hundreds of children poured, shouting and laughing, into the streets.

In the Plaza del Progreso, a square situated in one of the oldest districts of Madrid, at ten minutes past five, three children were playing at soldiers in a deserted building site opposite an infants' crèche. They saw something black fall from the sky; and one of them shouted in fun, "A bomb . . . a bomb!" and all three of them threw themselves flat on the ground. They were the only surviving eyewitnesses of the destruction of the infants' home and the entire Plaza del Progreso. A few minutes later twelve unrecognizable little corpses were dug up out of the ruins.

Franco's squadron, consisting of six three-engined Junker bombers, had silently and almost noiselessly approached the town at a very great height. The bombs were dropped on the unsuspecting city out of a clear sky. In the streets of Getafe sixty children lay dead, blown to pieces, maimed. The tower of the old church of San Ginés, in the centre of the town, slowly leaned forward and then crashed to the ground with a noise as of thunder. In the Calle de Luna a bomb fell in the midst of a queue of women waiting outside a dairy. Thirty-five women, some with children in their arms, were killed. On the opposite side of the road was a butcher's shop. The butcher was killed amongst his hanging carcasses of sheep and calves. A woman who had just entered the shop holding a child by the hand was beheaded. Ten seconds before the explosion witnesses had seen coming along the street a donkey laden with all the worldly possessions of a family of refugee peasants, followed by an old man and two little girls. Ten seconds later the only things that could be distinguished from a bloody mass of remains were two little hooves that had been hurled into the gutter some distance away.

In the centre of the town, where there are no barracks or any kind of military defences, twelve bombs fell in all. One exploded in the Calle de Fuencarral, killing ten passers-by and causing the petrol tank of a motor car to explode, so that the occupants were burned to death. In the Calle de Espada the children of Militiamen and other war victims, who were housed in a day nursery, were buried beneath the ruins of a fallen house. Of a bus that, crammed full of passengers, was running from the Calle de Preciados towards the Plaza del Callao, all that was left was a few scattered metal parts and a few rags and tatters. Another bomb fell in a little park outside the Puerta de Toledo.

"The little park," Ginés Ganga, a member of the Cortes, who was an eyewitness of this, told me, "was full of old women sunning themselves, courting couples and

mothers taking their children for a walk. The explosion stunned me; when I opened my eyes I saw shapeless fragments of flesh lying scattered all round on the grass; arms, legs, all naked—I don't know how that came about—and queerly distorted. The only partially intact corpse was sitting on one of the benches; to judge by the clothing it most have been an old woman; she was leaning forward on crutches—only the head was missing. . . .”

On the following day Madrid buried its dead. There were 200 of them and two thirds of them were women and children. Only 180 could be identified. A further 300, for the most part hopeless cases, lay in the hospitals.

On November 2nd Madrid was bombed three times. In the Calle Jaime Vera, a narrow, wretched alley in the south of the city, three children were killed and eight women injured. Half an hour later seven dead bodies were picked up in a neighbouring alley. That same evening the corpses of fourteen women and eight children were laid out in the hall of a boys' school which had hastily been converted into a mortuary.

On November 4th, at 8 a.m., the market in the suburb of Vallecas was bombarded. Result: twelve women and children killed.

On November 8th the bombardment of Madrid by German heavy artillery began. Simultaneously a squadron of Junkers and Caproni bombers appeared over the working-class districts in the south and west of the city.

On November 9th and 10th Madrid was bombarded almost uninterruptedly from the air, and from the south by heavy artillery. The spire of the Cortes building was smashed to atoms. In the Prado, which contains one of the most valuable collections of paintings in the world, two bombs exploded. It was rumoured that 350 people were killed and injured in these two days alone. About 1,000 injured were housed for safety in one single building, the Hotel Palace.

During the night of November 10th thirty bombs of the heaviest type and a number of incendiary bombs were dropped on the North Station, the Plaza de la Independencia, the former Royal Palace and the neighbourhood of the Puerta del Sol. By midnight five houses were in flames. Twelve thousand refugees from the southern districts of the city spent the night in the open or in the shafts of the underground.

From early morning on November 12th until the night of the 13th bombs were rained almost incessantly on all parts of Madrid.

At midday on November 14th twenty bombs destroyed whole blocks of houses in the Calle de Atocha and Pacifico, a suburb in the south-east of the city. The main entrance to the underground station at Atocha, in which hundreds of passers-by had taken refuge, was demolished; eighty victims were unearthed from the ruins.

The next day was a Sunday. The civilian population of Madrid poured out into the streets to enjoy the early afternoon sun and to draw breath after the nightmares of the preceding week. Whole processions of families thronged outside the over-crowded hospitals, waiting to visit their wounded relatives. But the industrious German pilots observed no Sabbath. At 4 p.m. a squadron of aeroplanes appeared over the northern quarter of the town. The big hospital of Cuatro Caminos, distinguished like all the hospitals of Madrid by a red Cross on its roof, was favoured with five bombs. Whole families died together in the wards, in the mortuaries. Not far away a water-main was hit by a bomb, and the spurting water, mingling with the blood of the streets, covered the pavements with a reddish slime, and scattered arms and legs all around. The net result of this Sunday afternoon's work was 53 dead and 150 injured.

On Monday, the 16th of November, two air raids were carried out. At 4 o'clock in the afternoon bombs were dropped on the wretched workers' dwellings in the narrow

streets of Cuatro Caminos. Shortly after 9 o'clock in the evening incendiary bombs were rained on the building of the Faculty of Medicine and the adjoining clinic, on the First Aid Station in the broad Avenida de Recoletos and on a Red Cross hospital in the immediate neighbourhood of the Plaza de Colón. A hundred dead? Two hundred dead? It is impossible to say exactly.

And all that had happened hitherto was only a foretaste of the inferno that was to be let loose over the Spanish capital on the following day.

From November 17th onwards, during the night of the 17th to 18th and throughout the whole day of the 18th, General Franco endeavoured, with the help of his foreign pilots, to burn the city of Madrid, with its million inhabitants, to the ground. From this time onwards it is impossible to give exact information as to how many houses were destroyed, how many men, women, old people and children were burned, killed or blown to pieces with fire and dynamite.

In the early afternoon of November 18th Madrid was swept by a sea of flame. The three largest hospitals of the capital, the Hospital San Carlos, the Madrid District Hospital, and the Central Red Cross Hospital, were in flames. The Puerta del Sol was in flames. The Hotel Savoy was in flames. Down the main thoroughfares, the Calle de Atocha, the Calle de León, the flames, shrouded in immense clouds of black smoke, danced their way from house to house, fanned by the icy wind of the Sierra.

This hellish bombardment continued throughout the night. Sleepless, speechless, paralysed with terror, hundreds of thousands of Madrileños spent the night in cellars, every moment expecting the building above their heads to collapse, and leaping tongues of flame to make their way down the stairs. The tunnels of the underground on the line Cuatro Caminos-Ventas was torn up by bombs, and the city's entrails were exposed to view. In the heart of the city, on the pavements of the Puerta del Sol, there was a

yawning crater twenty yards deep and fifteen wide. Fifteen incendiary bombs fell in the immediate neighbourhood of the Central Telephone Exchange alone. It is reported that the casualties were 200 dead and from 500 to 1,000 wounded.

On November 18th the bombardment reached its peak. The proudest buildings of the capital—churches, convents, great museums, the National Library, several embassies, the Ministry of the Interior, a market and whole blocks of houses—fell a prey to the flames. The bombs were of the heaviest type; a house in the Calle San Agustín was rent asunder from attic to cellar by a projectile, and in this explosion alone thirty people were blown to bits. Over the centre of the town, round about the Puerta del Sol, the grim engines of modern warfare rained down death and destruction for sixteen hours on end.

At half-past eight the following morning the black giant planes appeared once more over the Puerta del Sol. For a moment they surveyed the results of Franco's insane fury, then hurled, as if in farewell, a few more bombs and vanished in the dim glow of the southern sky. On the evening of November 23rd heavy rain-clouds from the Sierra brooded over Madrid.

A million people breathed again. The rain lashed the faces of the defenders of Madrid, of the homeless women and children, and drenched them to the skin. In the mist, in the icy wind, in the blood-stained mire of the streets they slept, stretched out on the paving stones. At last, at last, they might venture to sleep. Low clouds chased across the sky over a mortally-wounded city and extinguished the last conflagrations. For the space of a few days there was peace for the hundreds of thousands of women and children, the sick and the mortally wounded of Madrid.

THE CASUALTY ROLL

The following, necessarily incomplete, figures are based on enquiries made at the Madrid hospitals and mortuaries,

supplemented by announcements in the foreign Press and messages from the Reuter and Havas agencies. The figures are under- rather than over-estimates, since the missing are not taken into consideration. The list applies to our specified period of four weeks, from October 24th to November 20th.

- | | |
|---------------|---|
| October 24th | Bombing of the North station. 2 dead, 5 wounded. |
| October 30th | Bombing of Madrid and Getafe. 200 dead, 180 of which identifiable, 300 injured. |
| November 2nd | Attack on the southern district of the city. 24 dead, 70 injured. |
| November 4th | Bombardment of the Vallecas market. 12 dead, 20 injured. |
| November 8th | Aerial and artillery bombardment of Madrid. Many dead and injured, exact figures not available. |
| November 10th | Intensive bombardment of the district between the Cortes building and the Ministry of War. About 100 dead, 200 injured. |
| November 11th | Continuation of the bombardment of the centre and north-west of the city. About 80 dead, 400 injured. |

In the course of a bare three weeks, therefore, before the beginning of the general attack from the air, at the lowest estimate 400 people had been killed and more than 1,200 injured, exclusively civilians—the figures of the military hospitals are not included. The following figures refer to the decisive week November 12th to 19th.

- | | |
|--------------------|--|
| November 12th–14th | Bombing of the centre of the city, the districts of Atocha and Pacifico. About 80 dead, 350 injured. |
| November 15th | Beginning of the general bombardment of the city. 53 dead, 150 injured. |
| November 16th | Bombing of Cuatro Caminos and the hospitals. 100 dead, 250 injured. |

- | | |
|--------------------|--|
| November 17th–18th | Climax of the bombardment. At least 250 dead, 700 injured. |
| November 19th | Final day. 11 dead, 2,000 injured. |

These figures show that in the space of six days some 500 people were killed and 3,400 injured. How many of the latter succumbed to their injuries I have been unable to ascertain.

The total roll of victims among the civilian population of Madrid between October 24th and November 20th amounts, therefore, even at this cautious estimate, to some 1,000 dead and 2,800 to 3,000 injured. The English and American Press arrives at the same result for the same period, while the French newspaper estimates are somewhat higher.

ART TREASURES AND ARCHITECTURAL MONUMENTS

It is difficult at the moment to gain a general idea of what masterpieces of Spanish architecture, what pictures in the Prado and other museums, what collections and manuscripts in the National Library were sacrificed to the insurgents' vandalism. The following facts refer exclusively to the period of four weeks previously specified: October 24th to November 20th, 1936.

Of the churches that were destroyed in the bombardments, only those are here mentioned which were world-famous for their art treasures. In the course of the shelling of Madrid on November 11th the Cathedral of San Francisco was almost completely destroyed. Two days later the Church of San Ginés with its famous altar piece was razed to the ground. In the course of the bombardment on November 17th the Monastery of San Jerónimo, with its chapel, in which the last Spanish King, Alfonso XIII, was married to Princess Ena of Battenberg, and the Church of the Holy Trinity were completely gutted. On the same day German incendiary bombs set fire to the famous Dominican Monastery in the Calle de Atocha; despite all the efforts of the Defence Junta it was impossible to save the building.

Amongst the totally or partially demolished museums and public monuments, the Prado, partially destroyed by the explosion of two bombs, deserves first mention. The Palace of the Duke of Alba, which housed one of the most famous collection of pictures in the world and which had been turned into a People's Museum by the present régime, was completely burned out.

The old building of the Faculty of Medicine in the vicinity of the South Station, converted into a Red Cross hospital during the Civil War, was demolished by shells and set on fire as early as November 12th. During the latter part of November a total of thirty-five incendiary bombs fell on the National Library, destroying, in particular, the archives and the Archaeological Museum. In addition, several buildings in the Botanical Gardens, in the Agricultural School, in the Students' Hostel "Rubio" and in the Rockefeller Institute were damaged by incendiary bombs and partially destroyed.

Nor was the property of foreign powers allowed to go unscathed. On the night of November 16th-17th the French Embassy was twice bombed, one of the bombs falling through the roof of the Chancellery; it is a wonder that no further damage was done. The Casa de Velázquez, the property of the French Ministry of Education, was uninterruptedly shelled and bombed for four whole days by rebel aircraft and artillery; not one stone is now left standing upon another. In addition the Rumanian Embassy was set on fire. Finally the Central Telephone Exchange, a five-storey building, the property of an American company, was badly damaged by bombs.

Of the hospitals destroyed suffice it to mention the children's crèche in the neighbourhood of the Plaza del Progreso, shelled on October 3rd, and the hospitals of Cuatro Caminos, San Carlos, the Faculty of Medicine, and the Madrid District Hospital, which were destroyed between October 15th and 19th.

Among other public buildings completely destroyed were

the editorial offices and printing works of the Republican newspaper, "La Libertad", in the Calle de la Madera, and the vast building in the Calle del Marqués de Cubas which contained the offices of the morning paper, "El Liberal", and the evening paper, "Heraldo de Madrid".

It should be mentioned in conclusion that whole districts of Madrid were burned out, in particular all the blocks of houses between the Puerta del Sol and the Calle de Preciados, more than half the houses in the Calle de la Cruz, the adjoining houses in the vicinity of the Cortes, and a group of tenement buildings in the Calle de Atocha and the Calle de León.

On November 30th, 1936, Captain Macnamara, M.P., a member of the All Party Group of Members of Parliament which visited Spain, stated in an interview with Reuter's correspondent:

"A third of Madrid is in ruins."

And he added:

"We have been witnesses of the most infamous acts the world has ever known."

EVERYDAY TRAGEDIES

"I was at home that afternoon," Josefa Martínez, a maid, who was wounded in the air raid of October 30th, told me. "I had no idea there was an air raid. Suddenly there was a terrible crash, I felt a terrific blow and found myself lying on the kitchen floor. Then I noticed that my thigh was bleeding. As I was being carried away, I saw the little daughter of my mistress lying in the corridor, dead. She had been playing there. She was eleven years old. Just before the explosion the decorator had left the house. He had been flirting with me; I hear that he too was killed."

The expression "a bolt from the blue" has acquired for the people of Madrid a *literal* significance, for Franco's squadrons almost always approach the town at such a height that it is impossible either to recognise the planes

or hear the hum of their engines clearly. Without warning, from a clear sky containing no presage of danger, the bombs fall and mangle the humble folk as they go about their daily tasks, stand outside the baker's shop, or wash up in their kitchens. Suddenly the familiar background of everyday life is transformed into a scene of tragedy.

"I had just gone for the milk," related another maid, Emilia García, "when from somewhere or other there was a terrible flash. Then there was a clap of thunder, and I found myself lying on the ground; I had fainted and had been carried into a coal merchant's, and blood was pouring from my temples. I could scarcely see, but when the ambulance came for me I saw through the window that the street was full of bloody fragments of flesh; the pavement was red all over, and I fainted again. . . ."

"Women and children who had taken refuge from the bombs were sitting in the cellar," writes Ilse Wolff, a journalist, describing a scene in a tenement house during an air raid. "Smoke poured in. White dust descended on them. The air grew heavy, and one could hardly breathe. The children began to scream, the mothers were seized with panic. There was a roar above their heads. A floor had fallen in. They snatched up the children and ran out into the street. Bright flames licked the house. A few brave ones who lived in the lower floors ran upstairs again, threw a few bits of clothing, a mattress, out into the street. A child was missing. Other children were crying for their mothers who had not yet come home. Another roar. The lift had fallen in; you could see an arm, a leg, sticking out of the ruins. The Fire Brigade and ambulance men arrived. The dead and wounded were taken away. . . ."

Here is a last glimpse from the pen of my friend Louis Delaprée, of the "Paris Soir", who, a few days after he had written these lines, was killed in a passenger plane, attacked by an insurgent bomber.

"Yesterday," he wrote, "I saw three little girls standing quietly in the middle of the Plaza de las Cortes during an air raid with their heads in the air and their hands behind their backs. A Militiaman pulled them into the doorway of a house. The moment he had gone the children trotted back again into the street. An old newspaper-woman, who had a stand nearby, said to me with a shake of her white head: 'Why shouldn't they have their little fun? Our last hour has struck. . . .'"

An air raid, while it lasts, is not a political event in the mind of the person experiencing it, but a natural catastrophe, like an earthquake or the eruption of a volcano. One man keeps his presence of mind, a second loses his nerve, a third reacts with apathetic callousness. It is a question of nerves and constitution, and not of political conviction. During an air raid the civilian population is not a political entity, it is neither heroic nor anything else; it is merely cattle for the slaughter.

And this is why I can no longer pretend to be objective. Franco deliberately and consciously provoked this slaughter. On August 16th he declared that he would never bombard the capital of his mother country, and on August 29th he began to bombard it. He is a liar. He had turned his compatriots, private individuals in offices, factories, kitchens and so forth into cattle for the slaughter. This is no political act, it is a challenge to civilization.

Anyone who has lived through the hell of Madrid with his eyes, his nerves, his heart, his stomach—and then pretends to be objective, is a liar. If those who have at their command printing machines and printer's ink for the expression of their opinions, remain neutral and objective in the face of such bestiality, then Europe is lost. In that case let us all sit down and bury our heads in the sand and wait until the devil takes us. In that case it is time for Western civilization to say good night.

CHAPTER IX

THE LAST DAYS OF MALAGA

IN THE MIDDLE of January, 1937, the Second Division of the insurgent army, commanded by General Queipo de Llano and reinforced by approximately 50,000 Italian infantry, began the fateful offensive against Malaga.

I had just finished my first book on the Spanish Civil War. It appeared in Paris in the middle of January, and the English edition was in course of preparation.

I left Paris on January 15th, took train to Toulouse and from there flew to Barcelona. I stayed in Barcelona for only one day. The city presented a somewhat depressing picture. There was no bread, no milk, no meat to be had, and there were long queues outside the shops. The Anarchists blamed the Catalan Government for the food shortage and organized an intensive campaign of political agitation; the windows of the trams were plastered with their leaflets. The P.O.U.M.—the Trotskyist Party—was even more unrestrained in its agitation. The tension in the city had reached danger-point. I was glad not to have to write an article on Barcelona. I left by the four o'clock train for Valencia with William Forrest of the "News Chronicle". His destination was Madrid, mine Malaga.

The train to Valencia was crowded out. Every compartment contained four times as many Militiamen, sitting, lying down or standing, as it was meant to hold. A kindly railway official installed us in a first class carriage and locked the door from the outside so that we should not be disturbed. Scarcely had the train started when four Anarchist Militiamen in the corridor began to hammer at the door of our compartment. We tried to open it, but could not;

we were like animals in a cage. The guard who had the key had completely vanished. We were unable to make ourselves understood through the locked door owing to the noise of the train, and the Militiamen thought that it was out of sheer ill-will that we were not opening the door. Forrest and I could not help grinning, which further enraged the Militiamen, and the situation became more dramatic from minute to minute. Half the coach collected outside the glass door to gaze at the two obviously Fascist agents. At length the guard came and unlocked the door and explained the situation, and then ensued a perfect orgy of fraternising and eating, and a dreadful hullabaloo of pushing and shouting and singing.

By dawn the train was six hours behind time. It was going so slowly that the Militiamen jumped from the footboards, picked handfuls of oranges from the trees that grew on the edge of the embankment and clambered back again into the carriage amidst general applause. This form of amusement continued until about midday. There was no loss of life; only one man sprained his ankle as he jumped, and stayed sitting on the embankment, evidently *hors-de-combat* so far as the Civil War was concerned.

Valencia too disported itself in the brilliant January sunshine with one weeping and one smiling eye. There was a shortage of paper; some of the newspapers were cut down to four pages, three full of the Civil War, the fourth of football championships, bull fights, theatre and film notices. Two days before our arrival a decree had been issued ordering the famous Valencia cabarets to close at nine o'clock in the evening "in view of the gravity of the situation". Of course they all continued to keep open until one o'clock in the morning, with one exception, and that one adhered strictly to the letter of the law. The owner was later unmasked as rebel supporter and his cabaret was closed down.

One had often to wait for five to six hours to get through by telephone to London. Some evenings, when I got tired of waiting, I would pop over to the cabaret across the road. There in the boxes the, more or less, pretty cabaret artists sat demurely with their mothers, aunts, brothers and sisters. When their turn came they danced or sang in a state of, more or less, nudity, displaying a greater or lesser degree of talent, then went back to join their mothers and aunts in the boxes and drink lemonade. Had a mere man ventured in their neighbourhood I verily believe he would have been immediately arrested as a Fascist. On the walls hung notices: "Citizens, conduct yourselves with restraint at this grave moment. We grudge no one his amusement, but let there be no frivolity, etc."

In October, when I was last in Valencia, every second turn had been a nude dance. Now *brassières* and *cachessexe* were *de rigueur*.

Telephoning, by the way, was not without its charms. When one put through a call one had to send a copy of the message one was going to dictate over the phone to the censor, and while one was telephoning the message from one's hotel the censor would be sitting in his office, the text of the message in front of him, listening in. The censorship was strict, but the censors themselves were quite amiable fellows, all of whom one knew personally. If one deviated by a hair's breadth from the text, they would roar into the telephone: "Hi, Arturo, that's not in the manuscript!" "What—what?" the despairing stenographer in London would yell. "That's nothing to do with you," the censor would say. "I'm speaking to Arturo."

On Sunday the 24th a big bullfight was billed to take place in the Plaza del Toro—"in honour of the Russian Ambassador, who has consented to attend in person", announced the newspapers. The proceeds were to be presented to Russia for the construction of a new "Komsomol"; "Komsomol" was the name of a Russian cargo steamer

which had been sunk by a rebel ship when bringing provisions for Valencia. But on the Sunday it rained, and it was announced on the wireless, between news bulletins from the front, that the bullfight had unfortunately to be called off.

For days before this, however, the weather was glorious, and a German *émigré* writer took us for a drive along the shore in his car. There were four of us; the German writer, the driver, Forrest and myself. The writer—let us call him Alberto (we all had o's tacked on to our names free and gratis)—was a political Commissar with the Nth Company of the International Brigade. He was in Valencia on leave from the front; he looked well in uniform. We sprawled on the beach, blinked up at the sun, agreed that with the blue sea before us and the blue sky above us war seemed a highly illogical business, and indulged in similar high-falutin' reflections. When we got back to the car, we found four strange men sitting in it and sweating away trying to start it up, while the driver, a little fourteen-year-old Spanish lad, stood by blubbing, the tears literally pouring down his cheeks.

One of the men asked Alberto for the starting key and remarked that the car had been requisitioned. He showed his authority from some Control Commission or other of the F.A.I. (*Federacion Anarquista Ibérica*), a paper headed "Down with the misuse of State cars for private pleasure." His three colleagues were also Anarchists. They all had enormous great revolvers such as one only saw in silent Wild West films before the War. I had a suspicion that they loaded them with gunpowder and leaden bullets.

Alberto too showed his identity papers, with a photograph of himself as political Commissar of the Nth Company, and protested against the requisitioning of his car.

By now a crowd had collected—men, women and children either in bathing dresses or uniforms—and was following the scene with friendly interest.

The Anarchist said that he did not think much of a Commissar who, despite the Civil War and the shortage of petrol, used his car for joy-rides along the beach, and the car would be requisitioned.

Alberto said that a soldier needed a little recreation when on leave, and would the Anarchists kindly get out of his car, or he would put them out by force.

The driver, frightened out of his wits, stood there, trying to sniff back up his nose the tears that were running down his cheeks.

The Anarchist chieftain endeavoured in the meantime to start the car. From somewhere in the bowels of the maltreated engine there came a groan. This noise threw Alberto into a sudden rage. In an access of poetic fury he seized the Anarchist violently by the sleeve, and roared in German at the top of his voice: "*Rraus! Rraus!! Rraus!!!*"

This greatly impressed the Anarchists. Alberto's rage was obviously a proof of his clear conscience and his *bona fides*. They grinned and scrambled out of the car. "Next time we'll shoot you, all the same," said one of them, giving Alberto a friendly pat on the back with his revolver.

We got in; the driver blew his nose and started up the car, and we drove back to Valencia amid the enthusiastic cheers of the spectators.

On the day before I left for Malaga I attended a parade of troops at X, a seaside town not far from Valencia, at the invitation of General Julio.

General Julio had formerly been Julius Deutsch and Minister of War in the Austrian Republic after the collapse of 1918. His aide-de-camp is a Count Reventlow, nephew of the Nazi member of the Reichstag, himself, like Deutsch, a member of the Social-Democratic Party. When the Republic was set up in Austria in 1918 and Julius Deutsch was appointed Minister of War, his first act was to dismiss

all the reactionary officers of the old army—exactly what the Spanish Republic in 1931 failed to do. Deutsch was one of the very few men of the Left in Europe who knew something about strategy and military matters. At that time this was looked upon as bad form in Left-wing circles. In those post-war years the European Left, especially in the defeated countries, was ultra-pacifist. It lived in fools' paradises—Locarno, the League of Nations, Collective Security. The unsavoury business of arming and seizing power they left to the reactionaries, who were guilty of very bad form and actually did seize power: Hitler, Mussolini, Dollfuss.

Deutsch was an exception. When the situation in Austria became threatening, he organized the Austrian workers' defence corps, the famous *Schutzbund*. The *Schutzbund* was destroyed in February, 1934, by Dollfuss. But Deutsch was and continued to be the most popular figure of the Austrian Left, loved and respected by the rank and file as scarcely any Socialist leader of the post-war era has ever been.

According to European standards the parade was a wretched, almost comic affair; according to Spanish ideas it was a miracle of discipline and smartness. Drill was carried out with sticks; for the division had only 140 guns amongst 900 men. A company of machine-gunners dismantled and then assembled a machine-gun. General Deutsch pulled out his stop-watch: the exercise had taken ninety seconds—very bad indeed. The company commander stared at him as though he had taken leave of his senses. "What are you staring like that for?" asked General Julio. "I had no idea you timed this sort of thing with a watch," said the company commander, "I thought that was only done at sporting events, but it's a jolly good idea." "I'll buy you a stop-watch," said the General. "That's fine," said the company commander. "The Fascists won't half open their eyes."

They were all full of enthusiasm for *nuestro General*, who wore white cotton gloves, could not speak a word of Spanish

and had the most marvellous and rather crazy brainwaves that no one else ever had. He had, for example, invented a kind of buckle for fastening your spade to your rucksack. Had anyone ever heard the like of it? It was just like being in a real army.

Nothing was more flattering to these improvised troops of the Spanish Republic than to be told that they were almost like a real army.

I was told a great number of anecdotes of the first days of the Civil War. The Anarchists of the famous "Durutti" column, for instance, had refused to take spades with them to the front, declaring, with the twofold pride of Catalans and Anarchists: "We are going to the front to fight and to die, but not to work."

The first troop of the "Durutti" column only realised after a twenty-four hours journey by rail to the Aragon front that they had forgotten to bring provisions and cooking equipment, or rather, it had never entered their heads that a war necessitates special feeding arrangements.

The world was surprised at the rebels' winning victory after victory almost without effort—at Badajoz, Toledo, Talavera and right on to Madrid. Anyone with even a slight knowledge of the circumstances was surprised that the Republic should have survived the attack on it by its own army.

All the way home I myself wondered why the General had never removed his heavy military greatcoat, although there was a grilling sun and the sweat was pouring down his face. Only when I got back to the hotel did I learn the reason. He had his greatcoat and uniform cap and his white cotton gloves—but as yet no uniform.

On the 25th of January the news from the southern front became alarming. The rebels had taken Marbella on the Gibraltar road and Alhama on the Granada road—two key positions. It seemed that Malaga might fall any day now.

On Tuesday, January 26th, I left Valencia for the south, travelling by car with a Norwegian journalist, Mrs. G. G., a Polish journalist Mr. W., and a driver attached to the staff of the Spanish Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

We passed through Alicante on the night of the 27th and reached Almería, in the south, on the 28th. Here my diary of the last days of Malaga begins.

These notes, originally consisting of about twenty typewritten pages, were confiscated when I was arrested in Malaga; but in the prison at Seville I was able, while the dates were still fresh in my memory, to reconstruct them as accurately as possible, and to smuggle out this second version.

I leave unaltered these notes on the agony of a doomed city and the strange behaviour of the people who lived and died in it.

Thursday, January 28th, Almería.

Got up, still depressed by talk yesterday with K.S.T. (a volunteer officer in the International Brigade) at Murcia. He said that during the Italian tank attack on the Prado front forty-two German Republican volunteers (some of them common friends) had been massacred in trench because did not get order to retire in time. Useless and senseless holocaust. Red tape and negligence everywhere.

10 a.m. Saw Campbell, British Consul in Almería; following Spanish custom, palavered, standing without being offered a seat. Nevertheless was nice and helpful. Says Malaga will be terrible butchery. City believed able to defend itself to last man; says all foreign consuls have left Malaga because of constant aerial and naval bombardments. But British warships still in harbour—so still some hope of escape if cut off.

Conversation cheered us up. These British consuls in forlorn Spanish cities are like pillars in the apocalyptic flood: dry and solid.

At noon went on towards Malaga. Road becomes worse and worse. Flooded at several points by streams of water coming down from the Sierras. Wonder how lorries with troops and ammunition can get through. As a matter of fact they don't get through; the road, the only road connecting Malaga with Republican Spain is absolutely deserted. Is Malaga already abandoned? Yet we do not meet any refugees either. Very queer.

Motril, 3 p.m. Dirty little fishing village. No one knows where headquarters are. Finally we find them in the municipal school.

Fresh search for Commandant. At four p.m. we find him—an exhausted-looking youth with a five-days' growth of beard, a former post-master and member of Prieto's Right-wing Socialist Party.

Shrugs shoulders in reply to our questions about absence of troops and arms supplies on road. Says, "Three days ago twenty lorries arrived in Almería with ammunition. They asked the local Syndicate to take the consignment on to Malaga because they had to go back.

"But Almería Syndicate refused, saying it needed its own transport lorries for food supplies, and insisting that the Valencia lorries should take the consignment to Malaga. But the twenty lorries returned to Valencia and the munitions—badly needed—were held up somewhere in Almería, and Malaga is without munitions. The rebels have only to walk in now. Maybe you'll meet them when you get there."

G. G. takes notes, only to tear them up five minutes later. As a war correspondent you can't cable such things.

"By the way," said the Commandant, "you can't go on to Malaga. The bridge beyond Motril is broken. The road's flooded. You'll have to wait till the rain stops."

"So Malaga is practically cut off from the world?"

"As long as the rain lasts—yes."

"And how long has it been raining now?"

"Four days, and a wet period of ten days only ended last week."

"And how long has the bridge been broken?"

"Four or five months."

"Then why, in God's name, don't you repair it?"

Fresh shrugging of shoulders. "We get no material or specialists from Valencia."

The man's apathy exasperates me.

"Don't you realise that Malaga is a strategic point—perhaps the key to the war in the South, and that its fate depends on this bridge? I call this criminal negligence."

The ex-postmaster gives me a long, untroubled look.

"You foreigners are always very jumpy," he says paternally. "We may lose Malaga, and we may lose Madrid and half Catalonia, but we shall still win the war."

There is a good deal of Oriental fatalism in the Spanish manner of conducting the war—on both sides; that is one reason why it seems to be so happy-go-lucky, brutal and rhapsodic. Other wars consist of a succession of battles; this one is a succession of tragedies.

An hour later we drive on, despite the broken bridge. It means a détour of about ten miles over practically impassable field paths, the last mile through the bed of a stream ten inches deep. Our light car gets through where a heavier vehicle would be water-logged.

Last stop before Malaga: Almuñécar. There is a once famous hotel here; Count Reventlow recommended it to us in Valencia. The hôtelier, a guileless fat man from Zurich, apologises in German.

"You are my first guests for two months," he says. "I regret that you won't find my hotel as clean as usual, but you know there is a war on in Spain."

We say that we have heard so too. After two hours of waiting we get an excellent dinner and drive on.

We arrive at Malaga about sunset.

First impression: a city after an earthquake. Darkness,

entire streets in ruins; deserted pavements, strewn with shells, and a certain smell which I know from Madrid; fine chalk dust suspended in the air mixed with shell powder and—or is it imagination?—the pungent odour of burned flesh.

The straying lights of our head-lamps cast their gleam on piles of débris and yet more débris. *Pulvis et praeterea nihil*—Madrid after the great air attack and artillery bombardment was a health resort compared with this town in its death-throes.

In the Regina Hotel unprepossessing but good-humoured Militiamen are spitting on the marble pavement and eating the only available food—fried fish. We are the only guests in the hotel; the waiter tells us that this very afternoon a house nearby was destroyed by a 500-kilo. bomb, which killed fifty-two in that one house alone.

The other waiters are gathered round the table discussing the air raid and everyone's reaction to it; how Bernardo hid behind the table, Jesús gazed out of the window and Dolores, the cook, crossed herself fifty-seven times before she fainted.

I take a stroll with G. G. But the darkness is so menacing that we hurry back shivering and very uneasy. The porter looks at the star-lit sky, and remarks: "Fine air raid weather to-night." His daughter lost both her legs in yesterday's bombing and he wonders whether the bridegroom will take her without legs.

Friday, January 29th.

No bread for breakfast, nothing but black coffee; the food supplies of the town, like the munitions supplies, broken down as a result of irresponsible negligence; the damaged bridge at Motril has done its work, and the town with its 200,000 inhabitants is literally starving.

Busy all the morning visiting offices: Propaganda Department and Residence of the Civil Governor; come across

good will everywhere, but hopeless red tape and lack of organization.

Impossible to get a message through; there are no censorship facilities for foreign journalists at all. After endless palavers we succeed in having a young officer with a slight knowledge of French appointed censor.

After lunch I go down to have a look at the harbour. Opposite the harbour is the British Consulate. There is quite a sizeable hole in the façade; a shell from a rebel cruiser dropped there without warning, but fortunately it did not explode. The English warship, too, is no longer moored in the harbour. Europe doesn't seem to be interested in the fate of Malaga.

A few men and women come running up from the harbour, their faces turned towards the sky. A moment later the bells begin to peal: an air raid warning. There aren't even any sirens. Everyone runs hither and thither in feckless confusion; the panic is much worse than it ever was in Madrid. The town is smaller; targets stand out more clearly against the sea; and the population is obviously demoralized. Incidentally a false alarm.

Later, interview with Colonel Villalba, officer in command of the Malaga forces. Admits frankly that things are going badly, but says that ten days ago, when he was appointed, they were still worse.

"I first inspected the most exposed front: the coast road Malaga-Marbella-Gibraltar," he tells me. "I found no trenches, no fortified positions, nothing but two Militiamen sitting smoking cigarettes a mile away from the enemy positions. 'Where are your troops?' I asked them. 'Somewhere in the barracks,' they replied. 'If the rebels were to attack, we should see them and have plenty of time to warn our men. Why should they sit out in the rain?'" Go to bed filled with gloomy forebodings; try to persuade myself that it is all imagination.

Saturday, January 30th.

Visit to the Marbella front. Drive along the coast road; no sign of a sentry until, after about thirty-five miles, we are stopped at a barricade of stones; this is the "front". To the right of the barricade the Militiamen have begun to dig a trench; they sit around, their spades on their knees. G. G. focuses her camera. "Comrades," cries the Commander, "get busy. You are being photographed." He asks us what we "think of his front". I ask him what he proposes to do when the tanks arrive. He shrugs his shoulders. "I shall take my men up into the Sierra."

Sunday, January 31st.

Colonel Alfredo was supposed to be coming for us at 11 o'clock to take us to the Antequera sector. We wait for him in vain. At noon a Lieutenant of the Militia arrives and tells us that Alfredo is ill and that he has been deputed to take us to the front. We drive off about 4. I check our route by the map, for fear that we may take the wrong road and fall into the hands of the rebels. This may easily happen owing to the discontinuity and disorganisation of the Spanish fronts. It has happened to a number of journalists; and even to quite a large number of officers on both sides.

After twenty minutes it becomes clear that we have taken the wrong road. The names of the places don't tally. I draw the Lieutenant's attention to the mistake. He smiles at the foreigner who always thinks he knows best. As usual not a sign during the whole drive of a sentry, a patrol, or anything to suggest we are near the front lines. At last we come upon two Militiamen marching along the high road. It transpires that we *have* taken the wrong turning; we are on the Alfernate and not the Antequera road, which we meant to take. The next village is six or seven miles away, and is called Colmenar.

I ask in whose hands Colmenar is.

"Ours," says one of the Militiamen.

"No, the rebels," says the other.

The Lieutenant is furious. Finally we drive on to Colmenar. At the last curve in the road before the village we all peer out, our hearts thumping; what are we going to see—the green turbans of the Moors, or the black caps of the Militiamen?

Neither the one nor the other. There is no sign of any military personage in the whole of Colmenar. The front is seventeen miles further on to the north.

The Lieutenant suggests taking a field-path, not marked on the map, across country to Antequera. It is already dusk. We mutiny and insist on driving straight on. We won't hear of any unfamiliar field-paths. After half an hour we reach the front at Alfernate. It looks somewhat more reassuring than the sector we visited yesterday. There is a concrete shelter on both sides of the road. But the road itself is open. It runs straight on to the rebel positions, three miles away.

I ask the Captain in command of the sector why he hasn't blown up the road. He says indignantly that they would never do such a thing; they might need the road for a possible offensive. The shelters on both sides would suffice to stop an advance on the part of the enemy infantry.

"And what about tanks?"

The Captain shrugs his shoulders. "Nothing's any use against tanks."

"All the same," I ask, "what are you going to do if they come?"

"We'll go up into the Sierra."

(As a matter of fact it was in this very sector that rebel tanks broke through five days later, thence to roll on unchecked to Malaga.)

Monday, February 1st.

To-day at last we managed to visit the Antequera front, which we tried to reach yesterday. It is the most picturesque and the craziest front I've seen in this war.

Just as nearly everywhere in Spain, with the exception of the sector round Madrid, the "front" here too is synonymous with the high road. Now the high road Malaga-Antequera-Córdoba runs, just before passing through Antequera, over a high mountain pass. The mountain range is called Sierra el Torcal and is a spur of the Sierra Nevada. The pass is three thousand feet high. The ridge—sheer rock—looking down on the pass is about fifteen hundred feet above it. There, up above on the Devil's Rock, squats Captain Pizarro, gazing down at the road below to see if the rebels are coming. Beside him are a telephone and a steel wire. When the rebels come Pizarro is to telephone down to the post below. Since he is convinced that the telephone will fail to function at the critical moment, he has provided himself with the wire, which runs eight hundred yards to headquarters below; when he gives it a tug, a bell rings. Sometimes a bird comes and pecks at the wire, and then the alarm is sounded below.

This has been going on for six months; since the outbreak of the Civil War nothing has stirred in this picturesque sector but the clouds at Pizarro's feet as they drift from rebel into Government territory and thence back again.

Pizarro, by the way, claims to be a direct descendant of the conqueror of Peru. Six months ago, when he and his company first occupied this post, his men had neither blankets nor cartridges. The nights are cold in the Sierra, and at their feet lay the enemy town of Antequera, where there were sure to be cartridges and blankets in plenty. Captain Pizarro, feeling the blood of the Conquistadors in his veins, marched down one stormy night with a handful of men to Antequera, made a raid on the commissariat and came back with blankets and cartridges. Soon afterwards they ran short of cigarettes. So Pizarro raided Antequera and brought back cigarettes. Then came the spring and the peasants had no seed for sowing. The Alcalde made a solemn ascent to the Devil's Rock and suggested that Pizarro

should make a raid on Antequera and bring back seed corn. And Pizarro made a raid on Antequera and brought back seed corn.

Never before had any journalists, let alone foreign journalists, turned up in this isolated outpost of the Civil War. The occasion was duly celebrated. We went down to the post below, where a sheep was slaughtered; as we were sitting down to our meal someone from above pulled at the bell and from the hill opposite a salute was fired.

Pizarro gleefully showed us all his treasures: a machine-gun (we each of us had to fire off a few rounds), his cavalry horses (two of them were led right into the peasants' living room where we were having our meal and they sniffed at the dish of mutton), and a chest full of hand-grenades (we were invited out of politeness to throw one, but we refused with thanks). G. G. in particular, charmed them, firstly because she was a woman, secondly because she was wearing trousers and thirdly because she had a camera. She was given a present of a live kid; it is lying down beside my typewriter as I type these lines, bleating for its mother and quite unaware of the fact that it is a symbol; a symbol of the excessive good-nature and childishness of this people who have had Moors set upon them too. . . .

Yes, why indeed?

I really cannot think of any reason.

Of course I also asked Pizarro, obsessed as I was with my *idée fixe*, what he proposed to do if there was a tank attack.

"Let them come," he said. "We shall strangle them with our naked hands, those devilish machines."

(*Postscript, London, Autumn.* They did come five days afterwards. I wonder whether Pizarro was killed outright or was only executed later.)

Tuesday, February 2nd.

Wrote an article in the morning.

Midday paid a visit to Sir Peter Chalmers-Mitchell.

Gr

He is the Grand Old Man of Malaga. In 1932, after having created the Whipsnade Zoo, the result of thirty years of planning, he bought a house here, to lead a peaceful and retired life. Peaceful indeed. . . . Adventurous spirits like him have a positive genius for getting themselves into messes with the most innocent air in the world. He has just finished his memoirs, "My Fill of Days." The well-cared-for house, half Spanish, half Victorian, and the neat garden, are just like an enchanted isle in this spectral town. We make friends at once; Sir Peter invites me to move to his house if the situation becomes critical. He is determined to stay on whatever happens. I have a vague feeling that I shall stay too. This town and its fate exert a strange and uncomfortable fascination over one. It is difficult to escape the spell.

When I think over what I have seen on the various fronts, it all seems hopeless. But the strangest thing of all is the absolute quiet on all the fronts. Malaga is bombed from the air at least once a day; at the front not a single shot is fired. The last rebel attack was carried out on the Granada and Gibraltar roads simultaneously ten days ago; since that, nothing. I have a growing impression that for some reason impossible to understand, like so much else that is inexplicable in this bizarre war, the insurgents have given up the idea of attacking Malaga. I have had several talks with Villalba; he has the same impression. The town is still without food and without munitions; but it looks as though in some miraculous way it will be saved—a repetition of the miracle which saved Madrid in the days that followed November 6th, when the Caballero Government had fled to Valencia and Franco could have stepped into the Puerta del Sol at his leisure. By November 10th the defence had been organized and Franco had missed his chance.

After some hesitation I wire to the "News Chronicle"; "Growing impression rebel offensive overblown stop"

Wednesday, February 3rd.

Did some work, visited the Civil Governor, strolled about the town. At least fifty per cent of the town is in ruins. A veritable Pompeii. The other half, if possible, is in an even more wretched state. The majority of the shops, offices, banks, etc., are closed. The people in the street incredibly ragged, shabby, hungry, miserable. I am glad to be back in my hotel; we have moved to the Caleta Palace, which affords rather more protection against air raids. The hotel guests are mainly pilots. The one in the room above mine had his observer shot down yesterday. He sobbed the whole night long; there was a constant coming and going of comrades, trying to console him.

In the evening I learned at military headquarters that Queipo de Llano had begun a formidable offensive on the north-western sector. Nothing but grave faces at headquarters, general whispering, jumpiness. I have a feeling that the last act of the tragedy is about to begin.

What a fool I was to send off that optimistic telegram yesterday!

Thursday, February 4th.

The offensive began, surprisingly enough, in the sector Ardales—El Burgo, and—still more surprisingly—it was repulsed. Watched the fighting from a hill. Horrible butchery. Spoke to a deserter, Antonio Pedro Jiménez, from Dos Hermanos, near Seville. Says that there is a newly-established munitions factory, built and run by Italians; says ten to twenty lorries are transporting Italian infantry to the front all through the night.

Visited headquarters late afternoon, asked Colonel Alfredo how things were going on. "Ça va mal," he replied. "Enemy attacking simultaneously on all sectors." Asked how long he thought the town could hold out. Answered three days at most. Can't get any message past the censor.

Friday, February 5th.

Rebel cruisers "Canarias," "Balears," "Almirante Cervera" and three smaller rebel warships bombarding all day along the coast north and south of Malaga. Where is the Republican fleet? Invisible. The rebels are unchallenged masters of sea and air. No food, no munitions. First symptoms of panic in the town. Learn that Civil Governor L. A. has deserted to Valencia. Last telegraph line destroyed near Motril. Try to get Marconigram through via Gibraltar but don't know whether my messages arrive in London.

At 5 p.m. impossible to obtain any news of the situation on the fronts. G. G. and I decide to drive along the coast to see for ourselves what's happening. We are the last journalists in Malaga; those of our colleagues who were here got away yesterday.

Reach Torre Molinos without a hitch. The C.O. there tells us it's not advisable to drive any further along the coast; the whole of Queipo de Llano's fleet is moored off Fuengirola and is blazing away at our front. The warships amuse themselves, he says, by picking out cars on the coastal road as targets. In the morning a Sergeant and three Civil Guards were hit by a shell from one of the ships as they drove along in a car. "There wasn't that much of them left," he says, pointing enthusiastically to the black beneath his nail.

We leave G. G. in Torre Molinos and drive on, the driver and I. We pass through Fuengirola; just beyond it there's a bend and a bay. In the bay lie, drawn up in a beautifully straight line, the "Balears", the "Almirante Cervera" and three smaller warships, scarcely a mile from the shore, and they fire salvos, just as in fleet exercises. Not a battery to answer them. A machine-gun barks in impotent rage from the coast.

We leave the car behind some bushes and proceed on foot. Beyond the next bend a whole column of lorries with provisions and munitions is drawn up. The drivers have

refused to drive any further, "because it is too dangerous". The front, that is, the miserable barricade of stones we saw a week ago, has been twenty-four hours without supplies. It's really laughable to think that Queipo has to bring five warships into action to shell these wretched positions. Obviously he over-estimates the defence.

The road now runs directly along the shore. Inland there is an escarpment, and behind it a company of Militia is concealed. It is posted there to prevent any attempt on the part of the rebels to effect a night landing to the rear of the front. They order us to duck. If a head is visible from the ships, they will immediately start peppering us over here. The ships lie directly opposite us, but they fire obliquely at the "front", which is about a mile further on.

It's all just like a film. One has a feeling one is looking right into the muzzles of the guns. First one sees a spurt of flame, then the smoke, then one hears the detonation, then the whistle of the projectile, then the impact and the explosion.

It is the sheerest target practice.

After about ten minutes the fleet begins to steam slowly towards Malaga, hugging the coast. The shells fall nearer; 500, 200, 100 yards. It is a veritable inferno. We cling to the ground with every limb, make ourselves as flat as flounders. We don't even dare to whisper—just as if we could be heard on the ships. The last hit covers us with a rain of clods. Then the shots become less frequent and the fleet steams past.

On the "front" everything is quiet. It doesn't exist any longer. Logically the rebel infantry ought to advance now. But it is dark and Spaniards don't like attacking in the dark. Probably they won't attack until first thing in the morning.

In the evening Colonel Alfredo comes to dinner with me at my hotel. Says Alfernate and Ventas de Zefareya

lost; that means the end. G. G. says she will leave to-morrow. Then I shall be the "last of the Mohicans".

Saturday, February 6th.

Several air raids during the morning. No news from London since Thursday, so feel certain my messages are not getting through. Went to Civil Governor's Residence, as I wanted to find out whether I could use radio for S O S message telling the world that Italian troops are going to capture Malaga. But at the Governor's Residence they've all lost their heads. Went to military headquarters with same object, but Villalba is invisible and has left orders that *la presse—la presse, c'est moi*—is not to be allowed to cable anything about the military situation except optimistic propaganda stuff. Army people always imagine that if they call a defeat a victory it *is* a victory and the dead will arise. They believe in the magical effect of lying propaganda just as bushmen do in the prayers of the witch doctor.

In the meantime G. G. has got ready to leave. An official is taking her in his car to Valencia. I have just time to scribble a few words on a scrap of paper for her to phone from Valencia to the Foreign Editor of the "News Chronicle": "Malaga lost. K. staying. Try to obtain appointment of Sir Peter Chalmers-Mitchell as acting honorary Consul so that he may mitigate the slaughter."

At 2 p.m. the exodus from Malaga begins. The road to Valencia is flooded with a stream of lorries, cars, mules, carriages, frightened, quarrelling people.

This flood sucks up everything and carries it along with it: civilians, deserting Militiamen, deserting officers, the Civil Governor, some of the General Staff. From the arteries of Malaga it sucks all its powers of resistance, its faith, its morale. Nothing can resist its magnetic force. The road to the east has become a road for one-way traffic. Nothing more coming through from the capital; no munitions, no

food, no organizer, no saviours—although even now it is not too late.

Nobody knows the fate of this stream once it is lost beyond the first bend in the road to the east. Odd rumours go the rounds in Malaga: the rebels have already occupied Vélez, the next town to the east, about thirty miles away; the stream of refugees is flowing into a death trap. According to another rumour the road is still open, but under fire from warships and aeroplanes, which are mowing down the refugees with machine-guns. But nothing can stop the stream; it flows and flows, and is incessantly fed from the springs of mortal fear.

At 4 o'clock I decide to have a look at what is happening in Vélez. My driver, although he is a former Militiaman, is infected by the panic; he tries to persuade me to drive on through Vélez to Valencia and not to come back. To calm him I tell him that we will decide when we get to Vélez. As the car drives off I see that all our luggage is stowed away in it, although I have given no orders for this to be done.

We let ourselves be carried along by the stream to the little fork that branches off from the coast to the north. The town of Vélez itself lies some miles inland. The road is still open. We drive into Vélez.

The Militiamen of the routed army lie sleeping on the pavements—in the cafés, in doorways, in public buildings. There is no order, no discipline—complete chaos.

Our car is immediately surrounded by a group of Anarchist Militiamen. "This car is requisitioned." "What for?" "To dynamite the bridge on the road to Ventas." "But I've been told that the bridge has already been blown up." "Shut up and get out of the car." After a little palavering I persuade the Anarchist leader to come with me to military headquarters. It is deserted. A solitary Civil Guard is killing flies in the courtyard. "Where is the Commandant?" "If you want to see the Commandant you must address a written

request to him." "Are you mad? The rebels are only three miles from the town." "You're joking. The rebels are fifty miles to the north, the other side of Ventas." "Can't you hear the machine-guns? That's the rebels." When the man at last realises that we are speaking the truth, he reacts in an odd way: clutching his head with both hands, he runs off and vanishes. The Anarchist, I don't know why, runs after him and also vanishes.

We ask everybody where the Commandant is; nobody knows and nobody cares. At last we find him in a restaurant—he looks dog-tired and has apparently not slept for at least two days; he is listening calmly to three Militiamen, who all speak at once, gesticulating wildly, while he carefully peels himself an orange.

"If you are a newspaperman look around you and you won't need to ask any questions." "What about the bridge to Ventas?" "We blew it up an hour ago." "How long will it take to build a temporary bridge?" "Twelve hours." "And then?" No answer. The Commandant shrugs his shoulders and peels a fresh orange very carefully. Then he asks: "Are you going back to Malaga?"

The driver: "No, to Valencia."

I: "Yes, back to Malaga."

"Then please take my political Commissar with you to Malaga. I have no car. Maybe he can get some munitions for us." "No munitions in Malaga either." "I know. Still—."

We hurry away. The driver is completely unnerved. He complains that somebody has stolen his cigarettes out of the car while we have been talking to the Commandant. The Commissar asks him whether he has nothing better to worry about at this moment; and he answers, pale, stubborn: "No."

We fight our way against the stream back to Malaga.

As soon as we get back to Malaga, and stop at headquarters, the driver declares categorically that he won't

stay any longer. As a matter of fact, I have neither the right nor the power to keep him; I only ask him to take my luggage from the hotel to Sir Peter Chalmers-Mitchell's house, since the critical moment seems to have arrived. Twenty minutes later driver and car disappear along the Valencia road, and with them the last chance of getting away.

It is dawn now. I feel very lonely, and abandoned, and sit down on the staircase at headquarters. Colonel Alfredo comes along and sits down beside me. After a while he says: "This is probably our last night. The road will be cut off in a few hours, and they will kill us like rats in a trap."

"What are you going to do if they come?"

He taps his revolver. "I've still got five cartridges. Four for the Fascists, the fifth for myself."

I have an uneasy feeling that he is acting a part, and the absurd idea occurs to me that Alfredo and the Commandant of Ventas and the Anarchist and the Civil Guard and all the others, including myself, are just children playing at being Walter Scott heroes and unable to visualize the stark reality of death.

It is completely dark now; uninterrupted grumbling of cannon and coughing of machine-guns behind the hill.

Alfredo takes me to the officers' canteen. I fill my pockets with dry bread and two bottles of cognac. Then I stagger through the pitch dark city to Sir Peter's house, which has the Union Jack planted on its white roof.

Sunday, February 7th.

Breakfast air raid at 8 a.m. The noise of artillery and machine-guns incessant now. Later on another air raid. One of the planes, a white monoplane, swoops scarcely a hundred feet above the house, screaming and scattering bullets. Lola, Sir Peter's housemaid, has hysterics.

After lunch—lunch is an exaggeration—went into the town. Since yesterday the physiognomy of the town completely changed; no more trams, all shops closed, groups

at every corner and every face shrouded in the grey cobweb of fear. Brilliant sunshine, the sky a glaring blue, but the wide wings of death are outspread and envelop the town. Just as I am passing Caleta Bridge a squadron of six rebel planes flies very low above our heads, sowing murder. I look for shelter beyond the bridge; there are two Militiamen drinking cognac, one singing the "International", the other, in a low voice and with a stupid smile, the hymn of the *Falange*. I feel the contagion of fear getting me, too.

Reach headquarters; it looks like a night refuge; inhuman-looking men asleep on desks and floors. While I wait to be received by Colonel Villalba an exhausted sergeant staggers in and is conducted straight to the Colonel. I enter with him.

We climb the hill opposite to get a good view. We can hear the bombardment more clearly, here and there we can see white puffs of smoke, but it is impossible to gain a clear picture of the strategic position.

On our way back we see thick smoke pouring out of the windows of the house adjoining ours. The house, lying in the midst of a large park, belongs to a rich Spaniard, who after the outbreak of the Civil War fled abroad with the help of Sir Peter. Now it is used as a temporary hospital. After a time the smoke becomes less dense and then stops entirely. Obviously the building has not been set alight by a bomb, but by a chance conflagration.

To think that such a thing is still possible. . . .

"What news?" asks Villalba.

"They are coming down the Colmenar road with fifteen tanks."

"How far are they?"

"An hour ago they were five miles from the city."

"Resistance?"

"None. Our people threw away their rifles and made off to the Sierra."

"Thank you."

The sergeant slumps down under a table and immediately falls asleep. Villalba has a short whispered conversation with some of his staff officers. An order is given to an aide-de-camp and they leave the room rather hurriedly.

I stop Villalba. "What do you want?" he says nervously. "Can't you see I'm in a hurry? I can give you the following statement: The situation is critical, but Malaga will put up a good fight."

"Where are you going?" I ask him. But he is already gone.

I rush to a window and look down. Villalba and his staff officers are getting into a car. Everybody is looking rather embarrassed. The car leaves the courtyard.

"Where is he going?" I ask an officer whom I know.

"He has deserted," the officer says calmly.

"It was his duty to leave," says another one. "We shall be cut off in an hour, and he is the Commanding Officer of the entire southern sector; so he had to leave."

"How can he command if we are cut off?"

"He has deserted," repeats the first one.

"Who is boss now?" I ask.

"Boss?" Everybody looks surprised. Nobody knows.

I go into another room. There is Colonel Alfredo sitting at a typewriter. It is all like a bad dream. I note that he is using the red half of the ribbon. I read:

"To all whom it may concern. This is to certify that Colonel Alfredo G. is leaving on an important mission to Valencia. Authorities are requested to let him pass."

"You too, Alfredo?" I ask him.

He blushes. "And you, too. I'll take you in my car. It's all up."

This is no longer Walter Scott. It is, rather, James Joyce. In the courtyard we find X. a common friend. He is ill; a high temperature, coughing and spitting.

"Come," says Alfredo, "it is all over."

"Go to hell. I'm staying," says X.

"Villalba has left too. We'll take you by force," says Alfredo, tears in his eyes.

"Go to hell," says X. (He is dead now. Eighty per cent of the persons mentioned in this story are dead.)

We step into Alfredo's car. Alfredo's mother is in the car, and Alfredo's sister and some other women, all crying and sobbing.

When the car starts I remember Sir Peter; during the last hour I have completely forgotten him.

"We must take my English friend," I say to Alfredo.

"Impossible," says the driver, "the Fascists are on the New Road; his house is cut off."

"But I only left him an hour ago!"

"They've entered the town since. Can't you hear the machine-guns?"

I hesitate. We reach the city barrier. The crowd of refugees stares at us, privileged owners of a car, with envy and hatred.

A feeling of deep disgust suddenly comes over me; my nerves are all to pieces.

"Stop," I say to the driver, "I want to go back."

"Don't stop," says Alfredo.

I jump out of the car. Alfredo gesticulates wildly. The car disappears in the crowd.

It is dusk again. I walk back slowly to Sir Peter's house. The rebels are not yet here.

They came the next day.