

Miguel GARCIA GARCIA

Looking Back After Twenty Years of Jail :

Questions & Answers on the Spanish Anarchist Resistance

When we lost the war, those who fought on became the Resistance. But, to the world, the Resistance had become criminals, for Franco made the laws, even if, when dealing with political opponents, he chose to break the laws established by the constitution; and the world still regards us as criminals. When we are imprisoned, liberals are not interested, for we are 'terrorists'. They will defend the prisoners of conscience, for they are innocent; they have suffered from tyranny, but not resisted it.

I was among the guilty. I fought, I fell, I survived. The last is the more unusual.

Miguel Garcia was one of the survivors of the libertarian resistance which refused, either at the end of the Spanish Civil War or World War Two, to give up the fight for freedom. There was a rearguard action, attempting to defend the workers' movement against Franco's murderous repression.

This interview took place shortly after Miguel Garcia's arrival in London and his return to political activity after serving twenty years for his 'crimes'. In it, he explains the motivation and methods of the resistance. It is complemented by some of Miguel's letters to the press and introduced a tribute from the Kate Sharpley Library.

First published by Simian, 1970. Reprinted 1975?

Expanded edition published by the Kate Sharpley Library, 2002.

© KSL 2002 ISBN13 9781873605035
KSL BM Hurricane London WC1N 3XX
www.katesharpleylibrary.net

What is Anarchism?

Anarchism is a political theory which opposes the State and capitalism. It says that people with economic power (capitalists) and those with political power (politicians of all stripes left, right or centre) use that power for their own benefit, and not (like they claim) for the benefit of society. Anarchism says that neither exploitation nor government is natural or necessary, and that a society based on freedom, mutual aid and equal share of the good things in life would work better than this one.

Anarchism is also a political movement. Anarchists take part in day-to-day struggles (against poverty, oppression of any kind, war etc) and also promote the idea of comprehensive social change. Based on bitter experience, they warn that new 'revolutionary' bosses are no improvement: 'ends' and 'means' (what you want and how you get it) are closely connected.

Dar la vida, por la vida (Give a life for life):

Miguel Garcia Garcia (1908-1981)

Miguel Garcia, who died in December 1981, was in some ways, perhaps every way, the reason why the Kate Sharpley Library exists. He was, as he himself ruefully admitted, the embodiment of a lost history of anarchism – part of a resistance movement, even now little known or understood by many. A movement that was disgracefully slandered by some anarchists as mere banditry. Search the "histories" of

anarchism. Those “scholarly” tomes by Woodcock, Joll, Marshall. Search long and hard but you won’t find Miguel or his comrades there. These are top down histories of “great” men producing “great” thoughts with little understanding of either the dialectic of anarchist theory and practice, or the genesis of anarchist ideas. It is only through the groundbreaking work of Antonio Tellez Sola that some of the story of the Spanish Resistance has been told (although his great work *Facerias* is still waiting for an English language publisher). Miguel’s own book *Franco’s Prisoner* (1972) is long out of print. How many more Miguel Garcias? How many more stories waiting to be excavated? How long until a more realistic picture of anarchist practice is obtained that will inform and aid contemporary anarchist struggles?

Anarchism for Miguel was what you did. Fighter in Barcelona during the July days of 1936. Fighter on the Aragon Front and outside Madrid with the anarchist militia. His memoir, *Miguel Garcia’s Story* (1982), is full of powerful and illuminating vignettes on the resistance of the Barcelona working class and life in the anarchist front lines. Wounded in early 1937, Miguel went on to spend 32 months in the trenches. With the defeat of the Revolution he went into hiding, was captured and spent two and a half years in a concentration camp near Madrid. On his release he joined the anarchist Resistance against the Franco regime. These groups smuggled countless Jewish families into Spain in conjunction with the French Resistance. Not for medals but from a fervent anti fascism. His experiences with the Resistance and his subsequent imprisonment are outlined in his autobiography *Franco’s Prisoner*.

Rereading this autobiography one cannot help but be struck by Miguel’s unassuming modesty and wry self deprecation. This was no act. He wrote as he was. One cannot

fail also to be struck by his commitment to anarchism. It runs through him like blood providing him with hope, obstinacy, humour and courage in situations many of us would have struggled simply to exist in. Trained by the British as a forger (as part of his work smuggling refugees from France into Spain) he worked with the Tallion Group until his arrest in 1949. Initially sentenced to death, the sentence was later commuted to thirty years. The early part of the book memorialises a lost generation of anarchist militants – El Yayo, Antonio Lopez, Jose Sabate (El Pepe), Gines Urea Pina – whilst his account of prison days rivals, at times, Berkman's *Prison Memoirs of An Anarchist*.

Miguel left prison in 1969 and, at the invitation of Stuart Christie, with whom he had spent time in Carabanchel prison, came to England. He became International Secretary of the newly reformed Anarchist Black Cross and worked tirelessly to aid imprisoned militants. Together with other active CNT members he was a critical link between his generation and the new generation of anarchist militants that was growing throughout Europe. He campaigned to save MIL (Iberian Liberation Movement) member Salvador Puig Antich from execution and founded and ran the International Liberation Centre/ *Centro Iberico* in North London. Comrades from all around the world would visit. *Black Flag* was produced there and the Anarchist Black Cross flourished. Countless campaigns followed including the Murray Defence Group in 1976. He spoke throughout England and Scotland, in France, Belgium and Italy in support of comrades in struggle and imprisoned throughout the world. A powerful and emotive speaker, his death from tuberculosis was a great blow to all who knew him.

Miguel was an anomaly of history. Somehow, he survived. Never, I would imagine, could he have thought in 1959, as he

sat in prison, that fifteen years later he would have been active with a whole new generation in a country he had never visited before. He had been part of a movement grounded in the everyday life and experiences of ordinary working class people that was driven into clandestine activity and guerrilla warfare. How easy, then, to live in the past. Miguel, though, was no historical artefact. Of course he carried in his heart and head the memories. Memories the like of which you and I can only sense. Of course he told stories from his life and of the comrades he knew. He missed them. Yet he had the ability to concentrate on the here and now and not the past. His arrival in London confirmed what some of us had been instinctively sensing anarchism could be and was. His very presence epitomised for us the necessary unity of anarchist practice and theory. Irascible, spiky, possessed of a ferocious temper that could leave as quickly as it came, certainly not given to suffering fools gladly, he carried with him a dignity and remarkable lack of arrogance.

This memorial booklet comprises the pamphlet *Looking Back After Twenty Years of Prison* (first published by Simian Press in the early 1970s) and a series of previously uncollected letters sent to various London newspapers and journals. *Looking Back After Twenty Years in Prison* offers us important information about the structure and decision making of the anarchist resistance groups. No leaders and all have equal voice in decision making. All skills are needed and valued: "From each according to their ability, to each according to their need." It is an important start in documenting the complex, organic relationships that the groups possessed and how the individual functioned in them. It's an important antidote, also, to the tendency to hero worship comrades like Sabate. Yes they were brave. No they were not any more important in the operation of the group than anyone else.

Miguel didn't write as much as he should have. He was busy doing things, trying to make things happen. He kept the memory of his dead and brutalised comrades alive by carrying on their work into new areas of contestation. In the appendixes to *Miguel Garcia's Story* Goliardo Fiaschi, Italian comrade of Facerias and Miguel's fellow prisoner, wrote: "When Anarchy comes the new generations must be told what the anarchists endured in order to liberate humanity from injustice, and the name of Miguel Garcia must be written in the annals of the future." This pamphlet is a small part of the project Fiaschi outlines.

Finally, Miguel Garcia, and all the thousands like him, help us identify what anarchism is. We see through his life anarchy in practice. Not a theory handed down by "great" thinkers which they, marvellously, have evolved. Not an intellectual strategy in the battleground of ideas. No. Anarchism is the self activity of ordinary people taking action in any way they can, in equality with others, to free up the social relationships that make up their lives. Such action will feed theory as it always has, imbuing it with feelings and emotions as well as ideas. Without those critical components anarchism will be as intellectually onanistic as any other scheme to save the world.

Further Reading

Miguel Garcia *Franco's Prisoner*. Rupert Hart-Davis, 1972

Miguel Garcia's Story. ★ Miguel Garcia Memorial Committee/
Cienfuegos Press, 1982

Miguel Garcia *Spanish Political Prisoners*. Comite Pro-Presos
CNT-FAI, nd

Miguel Garcia wrote extensively in the early volumes of *Black Flag* & appears in the wonderful autobiography:

Albert Meltzer *I Couldn't Paint Golden Angels*. ★ AK Press, 1996

For background material on the Spanish Resistance

Octavio Alberola and Ariane Gransac *L'Anarchisme et l'action revolutionnaire internationale (1961-1975)*. Christian Bourgois, 1975

Francesc Escribano Cuenta *Atras: la historia de Salvador Puig Antich*. Peninsula, 2001

Albert Meltzer *The International Revolutionary Solidarity Movement*. Cienfuegos, 1976

Antonio Tellez *The Anarchist Resistance to Franco*. ★ Kate Sharpley Library, 1996

Antonio Tellez *Facerías*. Ruedo Iberico, 1974. English trans. awaiting publication.

Antonio Tellez *El MIL y Puig Antich*. Virus Editorial, 1994

Antonio Tellez *Sabate, Guerrilla Extraordinary*. ★ AK Press and Elephant editions, 1998

Antonio Tellez *The Unsung Struggle: The assassination attempt on Franco from the air*. KSL 1992

Antonio Tellez *The Anarchist Pimpernel: Francisco Ponzan Vidal (1936-1944)*. Meltzer Press, 1997. The Meltzer Press POB 35, Hastings, East Sussex, TN34 2UX, United Kingdom
★ Available from AK Press or KSL From the introduction to *Franco's Prisoner (1972)*:

When we lost the war, those who fought on became the Resistance. But, to the world, the Resistance had become criminals, for Franco made the laws, even if, when dealing with political opponents, he chose to break the laws established by the constitution; and the world still regards us as criminals. When we are imprisoned, liberals are not interested, for we are 'terrorists'. They will defend the prisoners of conscience, for they are innocent; they have suffered from tyranny, but not resisted it.

I was among the guilty. I fought, I fell, I survived. The last is the more unusual.

LOOKING BACK AFTER TWENTY YEARS

'Let no one tell us that we are a small band too weak to attain the magnificent end we aim at.

Count and see how many are we who suffer injustice. Peasants who work for others, who eat the chaff and leave the wheat for their master – we are millions of men, we are so numerous that by ourselves we are the mass of the people. Workers who weave silk and velvet so we may be clothed in rags – we too are a multitude, and when the factory whistle gives us a moment's rest, we overflow the streets and squares like a roaring sea. Soldiers, under iron discipline, we who receive the bullets for which our officers get crosses and ribbons, we poor fools who have known no better than to shoot our brothers have only to turn about-face and those braided personages who command us turn pale. All of us who suffer and are outraged – we are an immense mass – we are the ocean that can swallow up everything. When we have the will, a moment will suffice for justice to be done.'

KROPOTKIN

INTRODUCTION

I have just come out after a long time in prison. Since my arrest on October 21st 1949 I have been inside 20 years and 30 hours. Add to that the 20 months I served as a prisoner after the Spanish Civil War and it makes 21 years, 10 months and 30 hours – and that is a lot.

How I reached the end of it I just don't know. I thought at the time that a sentence like that could never be lived through, and I tried, often, to escape, though I failed every time and it just made me more trouble. But a man with such a long sentence in front of him must never for an instant lose hope of escape or he will surely go crazy.

I spent the last three years at Soria, and they turned out to be the worst of all, for the jail at Soria is a terrible place. When I was transferred there from Alicante it had just been adapted for political prisoners; nobody knew how to run it except that they had been told to treat us in the toughest possible way. They were expecting the newcomers to be the roughest of thugs, and as it turned out they were well-mannered and educated. Quite a disillusionment! They felt inferior, and it is a very bad thing for prisoners to be under guards who feel that way. The officers were well selected for the special duties required – they would like to have forbidden us breathing as well as everything else.

According to their mentality I was not exactly a saint anyway. Ever since that faraway day of July 18th 1936 I had not stopped being active for a minute. I had had more than a fair share of ups and downs and hard times but in prison

they showed me how much I still had to learn about prison officers and their refined cruelty. In particular the prison governor there could quite easily have taken the place of any of the infamous war criminals of the German concentration camps. Tough skinned and hardhearted, he sometimes pushed me so hard that I was on the point of going berserk with him. When I was released he was nowhere around (though he was legally obliged to be there) since he had many reasons to expect a nasty scene, and if I had seen him he certainly would have got one. It was 10 at night and the man who had stood in for him called a cab. When the driver asked "Where to?" I found myself thinking "Well, that was a nice long rest. And now – here we are!" Then the scenes of that unforgettable October 21st 1949 flashed across my mind. Certainly the fight against the Franco regime has quietened down quite a bit since that day. Ten comrades lying shot in the back in the Barcelona streets; just one out of the 10 shooting back – the elder of the Sabater brothers (el Pep we, called him) who, wounded and dying, took with him an Inspector of the Brigada Social; 66 comrades on trial, of whom another 9 were to face the firing squad. Quite a day for us. When I think of it now it feels as if I am still going through it. There is no need to ritualize the homage to the dead for us to remember those comrades who so freely gave their lives, we pay them tribute in carrying on the work they can do no more.

Now that I have left all that behind me, I am wandering from place to place raising the flag of liberty, never forgetting the friends back there and the promise I made to help them. In the talks I have been giving, old folks and young have asked me all sorts of questions which I always answered the best I could.

This is an interview I gave to one young fellow. I decided to put it down in black and white as I expect many of you would have the same questions to ask.

Miguel Garcia

INTERVIEW

Where were you at the outbreak of the Civil War?

I was living in Barcelona, and at dawn of the 19th July those of us who knew of the military uprising began to prepare. Since the government had been afraid to arm us, particularly the CNT (National Confederation of Workers – a syndicalist union) for fear that since it was opposed to all authority it would make use of the arms for starting the revolution. It was necessary to take the guns from wherever possible, in armouries and barracks. Barricades were thrown up and armoured cars improvised in the fight against the army. On the 21st the military uprising in Barcelona had been stamped out.

News came that our comrades in Zaragoza had not been so successful, and we immediately made plans to go and help them in the street fighting against the military. On the 22nd a column was due to leave with Durruti at its head, but on the 23rd since nothing had happened the six of us who formed my group set off in a car. In Caspe we came up against resistance and after a sharp fight with the Civil Guard found that we could not get through. We fell back to Lerida for reinforcements. The following day again we tried to take Caspe and this time met with very little resistance. We pressed on, but it was now too late for Zaragoza. Nobody had arrived

soon enough, and the military, which were very strong there, had taken the town. A front line formed before Zaragoza and it lasted right up to the famous battle of the Ebro. From there I went to Madrid in November 1936 with a Catalan force that was to help in its defence against the tremendous pressure from the fascist forces. I spent the rest of the war there.

What did you do at the end of the war?

I went back to Barcelona where on the 9th May 1939 I was arrested and put into a hemp warehouse which had been converted into a prison, since the *Prison Cellular* was by now brim-full. After 22 months I was cleared and released.

When was that?

March 1941.

What was the atmosphere like when you came out?

The atmosphere was good, though perhaps a little too optimistic. Although the Germans had pushed back the allies, people were so confident in ultimate victory that they did not attach much importance to this, and everyone was preparing for a possible come-back of the CNT. We certainly were active, but we also had to work cautiously since the firing-squad was hard at work carry day. Trials condemning 30 or 40 people to death were quite frequent. The *Prison Celular*, built to take 1,100 men, was at bursting point with 14,000 – fourteen in a cell! There was hardly room for them standing up and they slept in turns. 18,000 men were shot, according to the record, and it was unwise to hope for a mere spell in prison – people were automatically locked up for nothing more than having a union card. They were terrible times, right up to the fall of Germany. Much has been said about the

extermination camps of Germany but the systemic slaughter of Spaniards, particularly those of the libertarian movement, at this time reached proportions that have never been [?]

What did you do at the end of the World War?

We were all certain that the Spanish exiles, with the help of the Allied Forces, would invade Spain to smash the last stronghold of Fascism in Europe. But no, as everyone knows, the interests of economic investment came first, and Franco went happily on with his reign of terror. Many people accepted that nothing could be done, but others did not and carried on fighting in secret resistance groups.

How did these group develop?

Well, in fact, as far as the libertarian movement is concerned, undercover resistance has never died; but at the end of World War II it was reinforced by comrades who had been fighting on the side of the Allies and wanted to fight on in independent groups. They crossed the frontier and made contact with comrades in the interior, and wreaked havoc for the regime by sabotaging electricity plants, industry and the banking system, and the same time crossing and recrossing into France and making complete fools of the frontier guards. Occasionally there were the inevitable skirmishes with the police and Civil Guards, by whom they came to be regarded with terror.

Were there any men lost among the guerrilleros?

Yes, many comrades left their blood on Catalan soil, but many, many of the servants of the regime also paid with their lives.

Was there any guerrilla who stood out from the rest?

Somebody will always stand out from the rest more or less in any life-situation. There were men in the movement who, whether by luck or ability became famous and very much feared by the enemies of freedom.

Can't you give me any names?

I am not keen on mentioning the names of men who distinguished themselves, since we are opposed to all idols, but to satisfy your curiosity I will tell you of two who were renowned for their quick reflexes, their courage and for the havoc they caused for the regime. These were Jose Luis Facerias and Francisco Sabater Llopart. Sabate's elder brother was with me in that hemp warehouse I told you about when I explained how I was arrested at the end of the war; he died in a police ambush – but not without making sure he took with him a police inspector.

Anyone else?

Many. In fact hundreds, but there was one group that stood out because of the affinity that existed amongst all its members. It was called the Los Manos group. They were comrades who had known each other a long time and had weathered good and bad together – plenty of the bad.

Can't you tell me about any particular thing they did?

Can I? I could make a 100,000 page book about it. But I'll tell you one about Sabater; it's a good one and will give you some idea of his fast reflexes. It was in Barcelona and Sabater was riding on the platform of a tram. He was dressed as a poultry-farmer and hanging on his arm was an egg-basket in which

his submachine gun was hidden. He thought one of the other passengers looked like one of the secret police and he got off the tram to see if he would follow him. Well, the other fellow got off too and started to follow. After a short distance Sabater, in one of those lightning-reactions that only fast movers get, spun round like a cat, grabbed the chap by the lapels and said: "Who are you? Let's have your papers, pronto!" He almost snatched the identity card out of his pocket and seeing that he was a detective, picked him up by his jacket collar. He spun him round and sent him flying with a very powerful boot, thundering after him in raucous Catalan: "Get out of here and don't bother me again!" The fellow took off as if the devil was after him and never dared to look back once. When you think that it was just like doing it in the middle of Piccadilly you'll get some idea of the nerve this man must have had.

How many men to a group?

It varied. Usually about six and never more than twelve.

Where were they recruited?

I don't think recruit is the right word when there were always enough comrades keen enough to form a group. But since the strength of these groups lay in their solidarity and affinity, they never approached anyone unless through heavy losses.

Was Sabater as good a leader as he was a fast-mover?

We have no leaders in our movement. Every man in a group was his own leader and nobody took decisions without everybody's agreement. If the need arises to represent somebody on their behalf, the man chosen is no more than a delegate and his only authority lies in carrying out decisions agreed upon by the group members.

But didn't this create endless discussion and delay important decisions?

Any action is thoroughly discussed before carrying it out, but in a way so that every man states his opinion and we come up with the most appropriate and sensible decision, as is logical. As far as delaying decision-making goes, in specific instances of unforeseen circumstances the individual acts on his own initiative at the time. It's not done any old how. Each group member knows what he has to do and when to do it. These are determined men, with lots of fighting experience. Each man uses his own particular knowledge for the benefit of the group without attaching any more importance to it than that. In our society most people expect anyone with specialist knowledge to exploit it for profit-making and it is perhaps difficult for you to understand the spontaneity and freedom of spirit in libertarian dealings. We are all brethren of the same family and our fatherland is humanity itself.

What exactly is the libertarian movement?

The word liberty has been bandied about quite a lot, and to say that a libertarian is a lover of liberty can be rather vague, but in fact it could be said to suffice. However, to avoid confusion it is best to say that the libertarian movement includes all those who reject imposed authority. Any individual who has sufficient insight to understand that his own rights end only where those of his neighbours' begin, who does not want to treat people any different to the way he would wish them to treat him, is capable of living without guards and policemen to impose rules on him concerning what he may or may not do.

Yes, that's fine, but I meant the Spanish libertarian movement in particular.

Well, it is composed of the Libertarian Youth (JJLL), the syndicalists (CNT) and the pure anarchists (FAI).

And what exactly are these three?

The youth movement consists of just the young libertarians. The syndicalists are the workers and their unions in their various trades; the pure anarchists are the ideologists of the libertarian ideal.

Are these three movements independent from each other?

Completely – otherwise they would no longer be libertarian.

And did they attempt to establish collectives during the Civil War?

Yes, and it worked too, in spite of opposition from other ideological elements. It showed clearly that the idea of all living and working together as one family is perfectly feasible.

Can you tell me about any specific case?

Yes, certainly. In Lerida for example; I spent two days there on leave from the Aragon front on one of the farming collectives. The whole thing was running in harmony and perfect order; everybody looked happy in a way that I had never mm before among country folk. They now had no more problems, financial or otherwise.

The same thing happened in industry. Factories and workshops were collectivised, and when the original owners

moved back in at the end of the war they found them in better running order than when they had left them. Everybody knows how a collective gets under way so I won't bother to go into it again.

Perhaps, but I myself don't know much about it. For example, how did you organise the administration in a factory?

Just the same way it is organised now, except that position in administration do not exist within a hierarchy which demands respect from inferiors. All we have to do is to get rid of a few prejudices and realise that it is no more difficult to work at a desk than on the production line.

But then won't everybody opt for the production line rather than the desk, since the money is the same?

Yes, perhaps an actor, seeing that he is not going to earn any more than an usher, would rather be an usher. And this is exactly what did happen in Barcelona in the case of a well-known actor, Enrique Borrás, who tried to change places with an usher for a few days to see what would happen. He made his point, since as you can see it is not easy for an usher to do the job of a first-rate actor, and Borrás would only have been cheapening his vocation. Every individual is born for a certain function in society in accordance with his aptitudes, and the idea of valuing one's function in hard cash is only a creation of our modern society. In real life we each of us follow if we can, our impulses and these are derived from what our organisms require. It is just as absurd to suggest that a man gifted in the arts would win glory as a dustman as it is to force a left-handed person into doing things right-handed. You can

be sure that in a free society production would become balanced to suit people's aptitudes.

I would like to believe what you are saying but it would seem to me to be very difficult to put into practice.

It's all a problem of education, and whether we want to live in shacks or palaces – that is. putting progress and civilisation within reach of everybody. The solution to your doubts lies in the verse of an English poet:

Labour is the one thing man has had too much of

Let's abolish labour, let's have done with labouring!

Work can be fun, and men can enjoy it; then it's not labour.

Let's have it so! Let's make a revolution for fun!

Very original. But, tell me, how are you going to set about replacing the present structures with the new?

Whatever is not covered by the regulations is solved by logic, and the present laws are only the consequences of anti-social customs. You can be sure that mankind's ingenuity will not disappear just because of social change. Let the bird alone and he will find the best place for a nest.

There is something that I have always wondered about. How did the libertarians take the militarization of their forces during the Civil War?

Very badly. Since we were opposed to war, we were opposed to all specialist organisation for making it, but here is where that logic comes in. We found ourselves in a situation where

the alternatives were war or revolution, but if we wanted to have a revolution we had first to win the war. There is no doubt that war is a specialist subject, a profession with its own necessary techniques that cannot be improvised. Had we all been libertarian the process would have been unnecessary, but Spain has always been a country with a high illiteracy rate, more so in the ideological and political aspect. State power like Church power was based on the ignorance of the people; there were people everywhere who knew the whole catechism by heart yet without hardly knowing left from right. With a whole people in that state – anxious for liberty, but full of old, deep-rooted prejudices – it was inevitable that the various political factions should try to impose a system which would guarantee them control. We would never have needed it, but they did. We had to compromise, and militarization went ahead.

But wasn't this useful in any way?

Certainly it was. It was extremely useful for the Communists in their struggle for power. They accept imposed discipline as a basic principle, whilst we believe only in self-discipline which the individual must impose on himself.

Lastly, what do you think the future holds for Spain?

It is difficult to say, the fear of vengeance is persistent among the members in the government. The regime, built as it is on the bodies of more than a million dead, is terrified of having to account for its crimes. Something would have evolved long before now were it not for this fear, since the regime has hardly ever known harmony in its midst.

There is one right-wing party which is very strong and with a fairly moderate programme, more or less on the lines of the Christian Democrats. They could have taken over if the extreme right-wing Opus Dei had not jumped in ahead of them. The Opus Dei, which is still in power, is like a revival of the Inquisition, as if Torquemada had risen from the grave to re-impose his law.

The workers are becoming more politically orientated, but are still kept silenced by the law. If only they could organise independent unions outside state control, it wouldn't take long for them to be a big factor in what happens next, and the government will eventually be forced to concede them more rights. This will give them the freedom essential to plan their destiny and the future will be in their hands. Otherwise only prolonged guerrilla warfare such as the one started by us is going to bring us nearer our vision of the future.

Jose Lluís Facerias

Died murdered by the Barcelona police on 30th August 1957. He belonged to the Libertarian Resistance Movement and was undoubtedly one of the most gifted of men of action in all the groups active in the Spanish mainland. Quick thinking and decisive he held paralysed all the Barcelona police for more than 15 years through constant sabotage of industry and banking. Though he appeared fair and baby-faced he was in reality a man of iron. Surrounded by police several times he always managed to break out with his speedy, and decisive action.

Francisco Sabater Llopart

Died shot in the back in San Celoni by a special civilian constable, in January 1960. He fought in the Libertarian Resistance Groups of

which he was nearly always a delegate and formed part of the secret Barcelona Defence Commission which co-ordinated the groups. If instead of being a libertarian he had belonged to a Political Party he would undoubtedly have been the most obvious hero of all the guerrillas and they would have built monuments in his honour and called streets and places by his name. He and his brother Jose made the most compact and efficient team there has ever existed in any resistance of commando groups.

He will be admired for ever in the minds of many comrades

Letters

Letter to the *Times Literary Supplement* (25/6/70)

Sir, – Of three recent eulogies of Franco, including Mr. George Hills's work peppered with mistakes and bias against the libertarian movement in particular (I do not know the others), your reviewer grants the claim that “in the past twenty years there have been relatively few political prisoners” (May 28).

I was one of these, taken into custody after the police ambushed the elder Sabater on October 21 1949. I was sentenced to death, later commuted to twenty years, coming out on October 21 1969. Sir, in these twenty years of which you speak I lacked much but never, except for periods in the solitary hole, for company. “Relatively”? Yes, when I first went to prison (1939-41) there were 14,000 politicals – sometimes up to 16,000 – in the Prison Cellular in Barcelona, which was built on no generous standards for 1,000. Fourteen to sixteen people stood, sometimes lay,

ate, slept, defecated in the space intended for one. Now it has about 2,000 prisoners, few of whom are political.

In 1952, there were 600 Politicals in with me at San Miguel de los Reyes, Valencia. But in Burgos there were 1,200, and every prison had its quota, amounting to some 7,000 in all. Now there are about 1,200 politicals, in Segovia, Soria, Jaen, Valencia, Burgos, Zamorra – a few in Bilbao, some of the intransigents in Puerto de Santa Maria.

“Only a handful of militants have been shot” since 1949? One terrible morning, March 14 1952, at 7 a.m. there were twenty-one of us in the condemned gallery, No. 4, in Barcelona. I had received my commutation to twenty years the night before. Five of my close comrades were taken out to be shot. They were Pedro Adrover Font. Gines Larrea Piña, Jorge Pons Argiles, Santiago Amir Cruañes, Jose Perez Pedrero – an “active and organized opposition” of which you profess ignorance. True, none have been shot since then. They have been strangled by the executioner’s garrotte.

In our movement, the libertarian, we had 1,800,000 members. Eighty thousand went into exile, 500,000 were shot or otherwise “legally” murdered. This is to speak of the anarcho-syndicalists alone, who have borne the main struggle. But let each of the oppositions count his own and you will see why Mr Hills is wrong when he thinks that others than Franco and his cohorts care about Gibraltar. Franco craves what? – a population of 5,000? 10,000? – who care little or nothing about Spain. And he has lost for Spain by shootings, disease and death caused by imprisonment, and exile, the equivalent of the population of Barcelona among them some

of the most industrious, intelligent, idealistic and zealous of Spain's sons and daughters.

Are those who remain reconciled to him? I can assure you it is not the case. He conquered by force and rules a conquered nation.

MIGUEL GARCIA GARCIA

Reprinted from *Facts on Spanish resistance* No. 1 (published by Centro Iberico)

Letters to the editor, *The Guardian* 1/7/75

Sir – you describe Santiago Carillo as “Franco’s chief democratic opponent” (June 27). He is certainly not a democrat, in spite of his position on the so-called “democratic junta” which joins together the Communist Party with the parties that need alibis for their past conduct. He is not chief even of the Communist Party – as Marcelino Camacho, proposed by it for the Nobel Peace Prize, though originally styling himself a plain and simple trade unionist without party affiliations and just interested in the so-called “workers commissions” has now edged him from the leadership.

It is not even certain if he is an “opponent” let alone the chief, or the chief democratic one: the so-called Opposition played no part in the Resistance to Franco and while curtailed because of the wide extent of the repression, has suffered nothing like the libertarian movement which for 36 years has been fighting against Franco and been subject to execution and imprisonment for unheard of terms – Yours faithfully,

Miguel Garcia

83a Haverstovck Hill
London, NW3.

[No regrets] *Evening News* 28/11/75

As a Spanish citizen I do not find it in bad taste to “note without regret” the death of Franco. Perhaps if a British general who didn’t like the British Government turned London into a battlefield and condemned its citizens to death, exile or forced labour, Mr. Ball might not regret his death either.

Miguel Garcia (prisoner of Franco for 22 years)

Upper Tollington Park, Finsbury Park.