

# MADRID SIX YEARS AGO: STORY OF AN EYE-WITNESS

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**B**OMBS—instead of roses—saluted me on the morning of my birthday, July 20, 1936. At first, of course, having been rudely awakened by detonations and an unusual noise in the streets, I had no idea what it was all about. We hurried to the roof of our house. To our dismay, we beheld fires at various points in the city, we saw planes dropping bombs on certain objectives—barracks, for a certainty—, we heard the barking of cannon, interspersed with the quick stutter of machine-guns and rifles. On the roofs around us there were hundreds of people watching with excitement and horror the dreadful pageant of this morning in Madrid.

"Ah," said my husband, "the Revolution has begun!"

"The Revolution?"—But, there had been a Revolution in Spain only a few years before! I could still see the stormy mob in front of the palace, the hurried comings and goings of officers, of the Guardia Civil. I could still hear the jubilant shouts of the mob on that very evening when the King's flight was announced. I remembered so well the weeks of enthusiasm following the foundation of the Spanish Republic, of which the people expected so much.

To be sure, the enthusiasm did not last. The people were dissatisfied because the Republic was not able to cope with the country's major problem—the agricultural situation. The "intellectuals" were peeved because the Republic did not take a firm stand against the nobility, the Church, and the military. The Catalans and Basques found no more understanding of their desire for autonomy on the part of the Republican government than they had found in the Monarchy. Even the bourgeois middle class were dissatisfied, because the devaluation of the *peseta* raised the cost of living and impeded their social activity.

The last weeks had been filled with the most alarming rumors: that General Franco, discharged by the government, had not accepted his discharge; that he had flown to Morocco from the Canary Islands; that he was preparing an uprising; that General Mola of Asturias and General Goded of Cataluña were planning simultaneous revolts; that General Sanjurjo,

after his visit to Berlin and Rome, had taken command of the entire plan, and that he would give the signal presently.

No one knew how much truth there was in these rumors. The results, though, were visible enough: strikes and labour disputes in the Asturian mines, in Barcelona's textile industries, and in the iron and tobacco centres of Madrid. In the Cortes, the Left vehemently demanded a firm stand of the helpless President, Diego Martinez Barrios. Officers were discharged by the hundreds, but they didn't leave their barracks. In the different officer-juntas open fights arose among Liberals and Monarchists, which were intensified by the ancient hatred between Freemasons and Traditionalists.

Since my three brothers-in-law were officers—one in the Navy, another in the Army, a third in the Police-force—my husband and I were steeped in the undercurrent of these events, especially as my husband like most "intellectuals" was an ardent Republican.

"Ah, it's the Revolution, the real thing, this time!" he repeated with satisfaction. "The planes will be those of our side. They're bombing the barracks of the reactionary regiments. I must be off to the hospital. There will be plenty of work for a doctor."

I did not share my husband's enthusiasm. What good could possibly come of a war of Spaniard against Spaniard, of brother against brother, who yet all had but one aim in mind: to further the development of this gorgeous country, and to insure the well-being of this wonderfully gifted people? I wondered why men always think they must use force in order to improve the world. And I wondered, too, whether the childish faith in force as a cure-all would disappear if women had more of a say in politics.

But there was little time for such reflections. Routine matters of the household soon claimed all my attention. Things had to be kept going, even without my husband. He had dashed out of our house (which was in the suburbs of Madrid), thinking only of getting to the hospital. With his going—though I didn't know it then—our peaceful way of life had ceased. The next day he telephoned, completely exhausted by the unending stream of operations, and informed me that he would have to remain at the hospital in view of the increasing number of wounded that filled the place to overflowing.

Thus began in our own small sphere the long chain of human sufferings, heralded by the word "Revolution", continued by the Civil War, and eventually leading to World War II.

There was, for instance, the terrific problem of how to get a pair of slippers to my husband. Traffic was at a standstill, and the shooting in the city had finally developed into real street-fights. There was nothing left for me to do but to stop one of the many private cars, filled with armed labourers and surmounted by a huge red flag, and to ask for a lift down town.

I hardly recognized Madrid. At that time of the year, it is usually quite deserted. Now there were tens of thousands of men, armed with anything they'd been able to find, pressing through the streets, courageously trying to get into the thick of the battle. To this day I can't remember how I got to the hospital and back again, but I know how happy I was when I finally got back to my two children, aged 5 and 7.

Meanwhile the excitement had spread even to the suburbs. Truckloads of armed labourers were deposited. First, they requisitioned all private cars, ornamenting them with red flags in token of expropriation at the hands of the people. Soon things became more serious: the houses of many of our neighbours were invaded, and men and boys were dragged off to prison, if they weren't simply shot on the spot.

By this time the sequence of events had become a bit clearer: it was understood that the Rightists had regarded the murder of their Madrid leader, Sotello, (on the night of July 19) as the signal for the launching of a military revolt against the Republic—a revolt they had long been preparing for—but that they had been confused by the death of their military leader, General Sanjurjo, whose plane had crashed on the way from Lisbon to Seville.

General Franco had gained the upper hand in Morocco. With the aid of his followers in the Navy and Air Force (among whom there were many German airmen), he maintained a shuttle-service to the mainland, transporting troops for the reinforcement of the base at Sevilla which had been established by General Queipo de Llano. General Mola, too, had been successful. The greater part of the provinces of Leon and Castilla was in his hands, thanks mainly to the attitude of the population which in those parts consists of particularly courageous, traditionalist and Catholic elements. Under the name of "requests" they were later to carry the heaviest burden of the fight. In Barcelona, however, the revolt led by General Goded had collapsed. He and his officers had been slain by an angry mob. The massacre of the Plaza de Cataluña showed for the first time the cruelty which was to become one of the main

features of the Spanish Civil War, causing a greater number of casualties than the combined actions of World War II up to the campaign in Russia.

In Madrid the military revolt had been put down quickly, but with it had disappeared the Republic. One of the results of the revolt was the division of the Cortes: the Rightist members fled to one or the other of Franco's armies, so that the extreme Left had the majority among the remaining representatives. And now began a series of so-called Cabinet crises. The people neither knew nor cared much about them, although the Socialist leader Prieto tried to give them clear descriptions of the situation on the radio. Madrid preferred to listen to the bombastic and humorous radio speeches of General Queipo de Llano. Though not an outstanding general, he certainly was a good propagandist, and one of the first of his profession to recognize the value of propaganda in modern warfare.

Thus July passed, raising the problems of food supply and of finding room for the inhabitants of the surrounding country-side who were streaming into Madrid, and especially raising the question of what to do with the children whose fathers and mothers had hurried to the recruiting offices of the Republican army. By August, there were thousands of children roaming the streets of Madrid in rags, famished, and with no place to go. Together with some of his medical friends, my husband organized the first relief measures: one of the abandoned monasteries was taken over and made into a refuge for homeless children. My husband implored me to help them with this work. I took my two little girls to the place, and put them into one of the improvised school classes, for which we soon collected volunteer teachers. Thus began my relief work. As our institution soon numbered 500 charges, my private life ceased completely. There was no time left for it, what with registering new arrivals (not always a simple task, since only few could read and write, and many of them knew only their first name), arranging for their medical examination and treatment, bathing and scrubbing them, dressing them (for which purpose materials and volunteers were obtained at once), and, last but not least, feeding them.

In the meantime, we had begun to see that Madrid was no longer the capital of unified Spain, but only the seat of one of two rival governments. Franco's military superiority made itself felt in the open country outside of the larger cities, such as Madrid, Barcelona, Valencia, Malaga, Santander, and Bilbao, especially since the conquest of Badajoz had established direct

contact between his northern and southern armies. Now these armies began to press upon Madrid. The "reds" (as they had come to be called) had not succeeded in overcoming the heroic defence of the Alcazar, and thus Toledo—within 45 miles of Madrid—fell into Franco's hands.

The government therefore began to insist upon the evacuation of civilians, particularly of women and children, in order to alleviate the food situation. It was the signal for us to leave Madrid, the signal, too, for my separation from my home and from my husband. With my two girls and the majority of my charges I moved to Barcelona, which at that time was far removed from the fighting. The word "moved" does not, of course, begin to describe the trials of a 40-hour trip in a train filled far beyond capacity, lacking the most rudimentary conveniences, and constantly menaced by planes.

Barcelona, Spain's second largest city, is one of the oldest and loveliest settlements on the Mediterranean coast. The ancient Romans—and the Phoenicians before them—had been attracted by the beautiful harbour, and had cultivated and colonized the interior, which to this day has lost none of its beauty and fertility. To a great extent that is due to the natural industry of the Catalans. They differ in a good many ways from the Spaniards, especially from the Castilians.

The Catalans are one of the "Mediterranean" peoples. Like the Southern French, the Italians, and the Greeks, they are easy-going and vivacious, with a penchant for rhetoric and dramatization. In all these points they differ from the frugal, severe and reticent people of Castilla and Aragon. The Andalusians, on the other hand, resemble the Catalans. Moreover, the Catalans do not consider themselves to be Spaniards. They are very jealous of their language, which, however, to an outsider resembles the Spanish tongue about as closely as Czech resembles Slovakian.

At that time, the political physiognomy of Cataluña was quite different from that of the rest of Spain. Cataluña was a Republic in her own right, and had her own Parliament and President. She also had her own system of food supply and her own military administration. The most important party in Catalan political life was the syndicalist-anarchist movement, which stood in direct opposition to the socialist unions and especially to the more "centralizing" Communists.

In Barcelona the victory of the Republic had been felt to be the more complete since it had resulted in an autonomous

Cataluña. At the time we arrived there, war and Revolution seemed far away. The Revolution had been put down—the war hadn't started yet. As a result, it was comparatively easy for us to find shelter for ourselves and our charges. With the beginning of autumn, however, the food situation became difficult, as the Republican army had failed to capture Zaragoza, and Barcelona was thus cut off from its sources of supply. The part played by Zaragoza in the assault upon Barcelona was identical with the rôle of Toledo with regard to Madrid: behind these fortified bases, the Franquists were able to line up the forces of the open country against the great cities of the Republic.

The two camps were now consolidated, and the original military revolt developed into a Civil War between two parties which had come to be almost two separate states. For, if the Republicans had not gained Toledo and Zaragoza, the Franquists on their part had been unable to take Madrid. To be sure, Queipo de Llano, the "Radio General", had missed no occasion of reminding the people of Madrid that on October 12, the day of the "Fiesta de la raza", he would be taking his cup of coffee at the Puerta del Sol. But the Republican defenders, headed by General Miaja, a military leader of great parts, were not at all impressed by this statement—which, moreover, didn't make up for the missing heavy artillery on the Franquist side. On the contrary: their sense of humour prompted the Madrileños to reserve a table at the crowded café. On the table were a cup of coffee and a placard stating that it was "reserved for General Queipo de Llano". This gesture was every bit as typical of Madrid spirit as the later—and more famous—"no pasaran" (they shall not pass).

The improved military organization on both sides was accompanied by administrative reforms. General Franco installed his government at Burgos. It was recognized by several foreign powers. The Republicans meanwhile ditched the older Liberals, and called into the government the younger and more radical elements. The demagogue Caballero, leader of the Socialists and the man who liked to be called "the Spanish Lenin", gave place to men like the Union leader Prieto and "intellectuals" like Negrin and Alvarez del Vayo. In the course of these changes, my husband was offered the position of Under-Secretary for Public Health, in the summer of 1937. He moved to Valencia with the rest of the government, while the military command under General Miaja remained in Madrid. I, too, went to Valencia with my children, and our family was once again united.

What a difference there was between Barcelona and Valencia! The latter, a small provincial town with narrow streets and insignificant buildings, could never be compared with beautiful Barcelona. Even the harbour is puny beside that of Barcelona, which is the biggest and most up-to-date in Spain. But its aspect of concentrated activity lent the new provisional capital a certain spiritual superiority over easy-going, peaceful Barcelona. There were hundreds of foreign journalists who filled the hotels and cafés. English and American correspondents were always surrounded by mobs of adolescents who hoped to garner a few crumbs of tobacco, or perhaps a precious cigarette.

The most striking feature of every-day life in Valencia was the unending stream of foreigners on their way to Madrid, to join the fight at the side of the "Reds". Poles and Czechs, Austrians and Germans, Norwegians, Swedes, Dutch, Belgians, Britons, Americans, and especially many Frenchmen followed the call of international solidarity—which had become the battle cry of the Republicans—just as the legions of Mussolini and Hitler, along with detachments from Portugal and Ireland, from Poland, Czechoslovakia, England, and Romania, fought on Franco's side. I remember the first time I saw a regiment of the "International Brigade" on its way through Valencia, while a detachment of Italian prisoners was marching the other way and German Condor planes were circling overhead. It suddenly came to me that the conflict had outgrown the bounds of a national Civil War, and that it had developed into a European Civil War.

The appearance of Russian arms, especially of tanks and planes, seemed even more significant. It changed the aspect of the Republican front, because the Russians came not as individuals—like the rest of the "International Brigade"—nor did they come purely for reasons of foreign policy, as did the legions of Hitler and Mussolini. Their appearance served both purposes. The plans of Russian foreign policy and the political Communist ideas thus had immediate influence on the political outlook of the Republican government, while on Franco's side the national Spanish principles were never conquered by purely Fascist motives. Along with Russian tanks and planes there appeared in all cities of Republican Spain huge posters of Lenin and Stalin, and flowing banners sporting the Hammer and Scythe, and in gigantic letters the legend: "Viva Russia!" These things served to weaken the national motive in the Republican camp, and to put in its place a party-slogan. The Franquists,

on the other hand, accepted Hitler's and Mussolini's help without ever thinking of shouting "Viva Alemania", much less "Viva Italia", proudly proclaiming instead their "Arriba España"!

Judging by my experiences, which extended through the whole of the Spanish Civil War, I should say that herein lay the great weakness of the Republican cause, just as it was one of the points most strongly in Franco's favour. It was this fact, rather than any half-baked ideas about "class-struggle", which persuaded a large percentage of Republicans to help Franco, thus enabling him to announce on the eve of his attack upon Madrid: "With four columns I shall attack Madrid from the outside; a fifth column will attack from the inside".

For a short time, the increasing influence of the Communists brought forth greater enthusiasm and aggressive activity on the part of the "Reds". However, in the long run it resulted in weakening their position both militarily and politically. First there were misunderstandings with the Madrid High Command, over which the Communists were trying to gain influence. Then there were frictions with the bourgeois-liberal members of Cabinets and Parliaments, especially with Cataluña where the Autonomists as well as the syndicalist-anarchist movement took a firm stand against Communism. The worst was the effect of the new trend in Spain's situation with regard to the rest of the world. With the rise of Communist influence on the Republicans (particularly as it was accompanied by the use of G.P.U. methods), Republican Spain lost the esteem and sympathy it had enjoyed abroad. This was especially true of the Catholic parts of the world. And Catholic antipathy, in turn, affected Republican relations with the Basques.

Racially and historically, the Basques are one of the most extraordinary tribes in Europe. Linguists and historians are agreed that they are remnants of the pre-historic population of Europe, and that they are unrelated to any existing European tribe as regards both race and language. This nation numbers about three million, of which the smaller part live in the French Pyrenees departments, while the majority live in the mountainous Spanish provinces of Vascongadas and Asturias. Small though it be, this people tenaciously clings to its traditions. Devout Catholics and ardent lovers of Liberty, the Basques are cut off from Spain as well as from France by their race and language, and though they are industrious and exceptionally talented, they have never known national freedom and independence. Probably that was due to the mineral wealth of these regions.



If long ago the foreign conquerors sought gold and silver and precious stones in the mountains of Asturias, the seemingly inexhaustible supply of coal and iron, as well as other ores, is nowadays just as attractive.

All that the Basques ever wanted was Autonomy and the right to speak their own language, which, by the way, is so complicated that no foreigner could learn their state secrets. Since the Republican government recognized these demands, the Basques proclaimed an independent Basque Republic, in close collaboration with the Catalan Republic and the Spanish Republic of Madrid-Valencia. But the trouble was that these people loved their independence no more than they loved their Catholic faith. When the Republican leaders in Valencia, ever more under the influence of Communism, began openly to advocate atheism, when more and more churches and convents went up in flames, the Basques began to keep to themselves and lost much of their interest and their readiness to sacrifice for the Republic. This was the political background upon which Franco's superior strategy achieved in 1937 one of its most spectacular successes: the military conquest of the Basque Republic, with which the entire Atlantic coast of Spain came into his hands.

In the meantime Valencia had become the target of daily bombings, and of occasional bombardments from the sea. This was my first introduction to the "mass air-raids" which were later to become so familiar. Under the circumstances, my husband thought it advisable to send me and the children back to Barcelona (which at that time seemed like an oasis of peace and quiet), especially since Barcelona had become the port of entry for the food shipments from foreign countries which were beginning to arrive at last. I could not deny the justice of these considerations, although I did not like the idea of a renewed separation for an indefinite period of time.—How right I was! That separation has lasted until this day.

Even Barcelona looked different in this second winter of the war, in spite of the mildness and sunniness of its climate, which somehow makes life seem far less complicated and depressing there than in other places. Tens of thousands of others had had the same idea as we had had, and consequently the city was filled with refugees from all over Spain. Conditions grew worse when, after the fall of the Basque Republic, the government fled to Barcelona with the rest of its army and with thousands of sympathizers.

Under the circumstances, it was only natural that I should once again be called upon for relief work, this time in connection with the great organization which was being built up by the Quakers. I don't know whether anything has been written about the wonderful work the Quakers did in Spain. It was organized by Dr. Audrey Russel and her staff, who worked with untiring energy under the most trying conditions. I am proud to have been of some assistance to this group of marvellous people.

My work consisted mainly of interpreting, for the good Anglo-Saxons spoke no Spanish—nor did the Spaniards and Catalans know a word of English. And since bureaucracy must triumph—even in a Revolution and Civil War—and we were usually on the point of being suffocated by red tape, I had my work cut out for me! Usually it was midnight before we had gathered the different permits from the various government officials allowing us to take possession of certain premises, which we planned to make into shelters, food distribution centres, dispensaries, or canteens. After that, the places had to be cleaned and furnished, the food and medicines from England and from the States had to be sorted and distributed, etc. We did all we could, day by day, but we soon found ourselves unable to meet the rising need. Of course, our activities were not limited to the city, but extended also into the open country, especially to the villages in the interior. The food situation there was terrible, because people couldn't even go fishing as they would on the coast.

Things got steadily worse as the war went on. There were so many factions in the Republican camp, there was friction between Madrid and Valencia on one hand, and between Valencia and Barcelona on the other. Finally, there was the growing material superiority of the Franquists who were fed by German and Italian arms, while the Democracies followed Léon Blum's policy of non-intervention. Altogether, the Republican position was getting worse from day to day.

It is true that they had gained a victory over the Italians at Guadalajara—a victory which had evoked malicious joy even among the Franquists. But the non-existence of staff-work and of a well-trained corps of officers prevented their developing such tactical successes to the point of strategic victory. The courage of the defenders of the Republic was beyond dispute—as was the superiority of leadership and staff-work among the Franquists, who, incidentally, fought with equal courage.

In terrific battles the territory of Republican Spain was reduced day by day. Owing to the comparative smallness of the

Catalan Republic, this fact made itself especially unpleasantly felt in Barcelona. Aerial bombings of the city increased in number and intensity, and it suffered heavy bombardments from the sea. Strangely enough, we disliked naval bombardments much more than aerial attacks. Perhaps the reason was that we could hear the approaching planes, while the heavy projectiles of naval guns would fall upon the city, spreading destruction and terror without any kind of previous warning.

It was only natural that the deplorable military situation should be reflected in a further deterioration of inner-political relations. A new record was attained by the degree of tension between the centralist government at Valencia and the jealous autonomists of Barcelona. The Communists, then practically in complete control of the Valencia government, attempted at this point to destroy the autonomist Catalan government from the inside, insisting particularly upon the dismissal of syndicalist-anarchist leaders. However, since these two groups comprised the majority of the Catalan armed forces, they would not give in. The breaking point was reached in spring, 1938, when the Communists succeeded in taking over the Catalan police. Threatening at the same time to stop food shipments from Valencia, they demanded the dismissal of syndicalist members of the Catalan government.

This led to a revolt of the anarchist and syndicalist workers of Barcelona. They left their barracks, some of them even left their regiments at the front, and attempted to get the power into their own hands. For days Barcelona was the scene of wild street fighting. There were barricades all over the city; government buildings, barracks, and food supply depots changed hands frequently, until the so-called government troops—reinforced from Valencia—gained the upper hand and put down the syndicalist-anarchist uprising. Many of the leaders were shot, and thousands thrown into prison. From that day on, the Catalan fighting spirit was broken. In their hearts, the people no longer cared what happened.

These terrible days convinced me that Barcelona was no longer safe for my children—especially since it would soon be a real battlefield. Some friends of mine in Switzerland had long ago invited me to go there, or at least to send my children to one of the excellent boarding schools in that country. The latter argument began to weigh heavily with me: the schools, too, had been getting very poor, as there were no buildings, no books, and no teachers to be found anywhere. This was not due to lack of

interest on the part of the Republican government. They had done all that was humanly possible to insure continued instruction for the children. They had even extended courses to the country-side, and instituted special classes for illiterates in the army. The latter were very popular indeed. It was touching to watch these courageous and simple men as they would sit in the sun during their short hours of leave, trying to learn their alphabet from children's primers, and learning how to write.

As I intended to remain near my husband—hoping that this dreadful war would soon come to an end—and as I wanted to continue my relief work, I decided, in summer 1938, to take the children to a boarding school in Switzerland. I shall never forget the impression made upon me by the abysmal difference between life in suffering, battling, hungry Spain and life in the South of France, rich with food, joy, and laughter, or in staid and orderly Switzerland. It was like a holiday in paradise, this trip to Marseilles, Geneva, and Zurich, and I found it very hard to leave my girls and to return to the scene of the Spanish tragedy.

This tragedy was rapidly approaching a climax. I could feel it in the air when I returned to Barcelona in September. For weeks there had been raging the two "Ebro battles", the most violent ones of the entire war. The exhaustion of the Republican army and the lack of co-operation between Valencia and Barcelona were obvious to everyone. As is often the case in the history of wars, the collapse came far more suddenly than one would have expected, judging by the stubbornness of the battle. At the end of the second battle on the Ebro, practically overnight, the armies of General Franco forced their way to the coast. With the occupation of Tarragona, they cut the remaining connections between Valencia and Barcelona. The unity of the military operations and of the supply system was now completely disrupted. This fact, together with the indifference and discontent of the people in all of Cataluña, and especially in Barcelona, brought on the end very rapidly. The troops of Franco were approaching from the South and West, finding little resistance as they went along. By Christmas there was little doubt that our activities would soon come to an end.

I was faced with another difficult choice: was I to remain, or was I to leave? While I had never taken any political interest in the Civil War, my husband had sided with the Republicans. His brothers, his brothers-in-law, and most of his other relatives had actively fought for Franco. Thus I had had occasion to observe in our own family the ideological character of this

Civil War, which in that point as in so many others was a precursor of World War II. The Quakers asked me to continue working with them. They were determined to carry on, now that things showed signs of getting really bad. Finally, there was the fact that my children were in Switzerland, and that I wanted to get to them as soon as possible. On January 16, 1939, we left Barcelona with our entire organization. Whatever we couldn't take with us was distributed to the hungry population, which in silent dejection awaited the approaching armies of General Franco.

The scenes along the road from Barcelona to Gerona mirrored for the last time all the horror, the misery, the distress of these years of strife. Hundreds of thousands of soldiers, with or without arms, were hurrying to the border in any kind of vehicles, from the most elegant limousines to donkey carts. Hundreds of thousands of desperate, panic-stricken civilians were fleeing after them: old women, children, infants, with whatever livestock they'd been able to find—cows, goats, chickens—and pushing small carts containing their few possessions. There was no organization whatsoever, no discipline, no nourishment, no water—and all that for days, even for weeks on end. It was all so utterly senseless! Nobody would have done any harm to those poor farmers, those women and children. And from France they could expect nothing but more misery, and often a lengthy incarceration in some concentration camp. But, of course, such reflections mean nothing to a brain seized by panic. We did all we could: at road junctions, or perhaps near some well, we put up provisional canteens, shelters, ambulances, etc.—but even our best seemed to do about as much good as one drop of rain in a desert. Nothing but the pen of a Benito Perez Galdos, the brush of a Goya, could depict this "road of misery", the concentrated terror and mad despair that were periodically whipped up to a sort of frenzy through bombings or rumours, or through days and night in the cold, torrential rain.

At the French border, Moroccan and Sudanese troops were mounting guard. They would let no one pass, so that the many hundreds of thousands remained backed up against the border under the most indescribable conditions. But when the artillery of the approaching Franquists began to shell these helpless masses, there was no stopping them: like a river in flood, they poured over the border, without regard for customs officers and police.

We went along to Perpignan. After the first bath in weeks (and the first night's sleep in months), we established there the

headquarters of our relief organization. The French authorities were cooperative, and since we no longer had to contend with the lack of all the necessities of life, we were able to give help to a great many of those poor miserable and helpless refugees.

Our first task was to find shelter for the women and children, and we were happy soon to have found places for the most needy cases, the aged and infirm, and women with small babies. The rest had to camp in the fields for many weeks, and at that time of year this is no picnic—even in the south of France. The opening of canteens, and the distribution of food and medicines, was much less of a problem, although there were administrative and political difficulties to be overcome. Things go slowly in a part of the country which is sparsely populated and comparatively "off the beaten track". It was months before matters were running relatively smoothly.

At Easter, 1939, my children and I were re-united. A few days before had brought the collapse of the last bit of resistance around Madrid—and Hitler's occupation of Prague (March 15, 1939).

All of us had hoped that the end of the Spanish Civil War would bring peace to Europe. Yet the end of that tragedy coincided almost to the day with the beginning of the great European Civil War which, in turn, another two-and-a-half years later, grew into a World War.

And it all began in Madrid—six years ago . . .