

THE CNT AND AMOR NUÑO HAD NO HAND IN PARACUELLOS DEL JARAMA

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The journalist-novelist-historian Jorge Martínez Reverte has written one book and a range of articles (as well as granting several interviews) related to the defence of Madrid during the civil war and to the killings in Paracuellos del Jarama and Torrejón de Ardoz. The core contention of his book is that the killings were down to the Madrid Local Federation of the CNT and its then secretary, Amor Nuño who, on the night of 7 November 1936, is alleged to have agreed at a secret meeting with the leaders of the JSU (Unified Socialist Youth) in charge of the Madrid Defence Junta's Public Order Department arrangements for the murders of the prisoners. On different pages Martínez Reverte pins the responsibility for the deaths directly on Amor Nuño, but nowhere does he attribute any such blame to Santiago Carrillo; at best he states that Carrillo was the Public Order delegate at the time and the man in charge of the JSU. In interviews he has granted, for instance, to Enrique Clemente (*La Voz de Galicia*, 9 October 2004), the statement is made "The Paracuellos killings were decided by the CNT and the communists!" And in his article in *El País* (5 November 2006) he writes: "Another department, the War Industries department, fell to an almost beardless lad, the anarchist Amor Nuño, whose second-in-command was fellow CNT member Enrique García Pérez. Once the Junta was set up, CNT personnel and JSU representatives had a side meeting and reached an agreement: the prisoners had to be separated into three categories. Those in category one, made up of fascists and dangerous individuals, were to be slated for immediate death "the responsibility being covered" (*cubriendo la responsabilidad*), that is, the origins of the decision and the names of those taking it would be covered up...One of the decision-makers, the CNT's Amor Nuño, proved rather reckless: within just a few hours he was to be giving the CNT National Committee a detailed briefing on the arrangement. This is recorded in the minutes, albeit that the names of the participants representing the JSU from the Defence Junta are not given." On the back cover of his book, the claim is made that Martínez Reverte's writing looks beyond any Manichean scheme.

Documents galore have demonstrated more than sufficiently how the responsibility for these killings lies with communist forces and with the JSU and its leaders. Including Segundo Serrano Poncela, José Cazorla, José Raú Bellido, Vittorio Vidali and lots of others and indeed we have the names of many of the killers, some of them cited by Martínez Reverte, as in the case of Ramón Torrecilla. To date no book or document had pointed the finger at the anarchists and the CNT. We know, for instance, that the 'removals' (sacas) of batches of prisoners started on the night of 6-7 November 1936 and that the Paracuellos de Jarama massacre started before 8.00 a.m. on 7 November 1936 when three double-decker buses, accompanied by several lorry-loads of militians, arrived at Arroyo de San José, near the Madrid village of the same name. The mayor's son saw this, as Ian Gibson and Javier Cervera, among others, have shown in their respective books. At that point neither the CNT nor the Libertarian Youth had been incorporated into the Madrid Defence Junta, joining only on the afternoon of 7 November, as recorded in the Junta's minutes and as Martínez Reverte himself reports on pages 214 and 226 of his book. On page 214 it states that Miaja held the first meeting of the Defence Junta at 11.00 a.m. and that everybody was present except the anarchists. On page 226 it states that at 6.00 p.m. Miaja convened the Defence Junta and that no party or trade union organisation was unrepresented.

However, as shown above, in this book and in articles published by him in recent years Martínez Reverte implicates the CNT in these killings, on foot of a document he discovered in the CNT National Committee archives at the Anselmo Lorenzo Libertarian Studies Foundation in Madrid. At certain points in his writings, the implication that Martínez Reverte seeks to make goes beyond mere acquiescence on the part of anarchists and pins the blame for said killings on the CNT and states that the anarchists were the instigators. Thereby absolving the JSU of responsibility for them (*El País*, 5 November 2006): If these murderous aims were to be achieved, alliance was crucial. For a start, the anarchists needed the communists because they controlled the Public Order Department, the police and all the records listing the prisoners and the allegations against them. Conversely, the communists needed the libertarians because the latter controlled the Milicias de Etapas. The mass shootings could not be carried out inside the city and the anarchist controlled the exits from the capital .. The orders for the slaughter came from soviet agents. Its implementation was the handiwork of dyed-in-the-wool, enthusiastic communists and anarchists. And in order to press home this accusation, Martínez Reverte focuses on the person of Amor Nuño, who was then a twenty year old and secretary of the Madrid CNT Local Federation of Unions during the latter six months of 1936 and he has it in for him. According to Martínez Reverte. Nuño was supposedly the real culprit in the killings and throughout the book and in his articles he hangs the most denigrating labels one could imagine on him. He describes him as an “anarchist of visceral instincts”, “liar”, “coward”, “traitor”, “surrounded by hard violent types”, “dismantler of checkpoints”, “beardless” “reckless”, “imprudent” and, by implication, “murderer”.

But the oddest thing is that the document unearthed by Martínez Reverte contains not a single piece of evidence to accuse Amor Nuño and everything is based on a supposition by Martínez Reverte who takes the Local Federation as synonymous with Nuño, and the assumption that the report from a representative of the Local Federation refers to a secret pact rather than being a report on the meeting of the Madrid Defence Junta. Besides, he offers no evidence at all to show that anarchist militants took part in the executions, but this does not stop him in his defamatory zeal.

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Already Martínez Reverte's misrepresentation has had a damaging effect. For instance, in his book *La Guerra Civil Española*, historian Anthony Beevor in Chapter 17, note 17, writes: “The issue of responsibility for the Paracuellos murders, about which rivers of ink have flowed, seems to have been resolved once and for all thanks to the draft minutes of the CNT National Committee meeting uncovered by Jorge Martínez Reverte in the CNT archives in Madrid. See Martínez Reverte, *La batalla de Madrid* (Crítica, Barcelona 2004) pp. 226-227 and 240. The minutes are reprinted on pages 577 to 581 (Beevor, p. 721). Without pausing to consider or to read the document at his leisure, Beevor, taking Martínez Reverte on trust, goes one step further and mentions the decision to shoot the prisoners in Paracuellos having been made at 10.30 on 8 November [at a time when, as Gibson and Cervera among others have pointed out, they had been dead for upwards of a day, and as Martínez Reverte himself points out on p. 301] during a meeting between representatives of the Unified Socialist Youth (JSU) and the Local Federation of the CNT for the purpose of coming to some arrangement as to what was to become of the prisoners ..

There is nothing to show that the Defence Junta, Miaja or much less the Valencia government had any intelligence about this decision, reached by political forces operating off their own bat. ‘The organisations that came to an agreement were led by Santiago Carrillo and Amor Nuño. Both were aged twenty. Their agreement was to cost the lives of hundreds of people.’ (Beevor, p. 261) Meaning that Beevor conjures up a non-existent meeting, places a date and time on the agreement

and goes on to indicate that this was an inter-organisation agreement. More recently, in an interview given to the magazine *Tiempo de Hoy* (11 September 2006), Beevor states that in order to point the finger at the CNT “I quote as my source Jorge Martínez Reverte and I believe Jorge who has investigated the matter”. Other journalists such as Germán Yanke (*ABC*, 12 November 2006) and historians such as Javier Cervera (*Epoca*, 24 and 31 December 2006) have swallowed Martínez Reverte's assertions whole, although, unlike him they do not contend that Amor Nuño was behind the CNT's arrangement with the JSU, since the names of the persons present are not given, even though Martínez Reverte insists they were.

What Martínez Reverte's interest is in manipulating the documentation to implicate the CNT is, at the moment, unknown, but it greatly resembles the 'Agit-Prop' formula in use during the civil war, albeit shrouded in apparent impartiality and objectivity. Beevor's error, given that he is a professional historian, is very serious since it indicates that he has not taken the time painstakingly and at length to scrutinise the charges levelled by Martínez Reverte's throughout his book and he places conscientious works such as Ian Gibson's book on a par with slipshod work like Martínez Reverte's.

Martínez Reverte's misrepresentations of the CNT and the anarchist crop up as early as the first two pages when, resorting to a stylistic licence inappropriate for any historian, he writes: “More than ever Madrid was a city fraught with contradictions ... Her cafes were staffed by CNT leaders who for years had been posing as aproned waiters and who hung out with cheap whores they liked to refer to as their *milicianas* on their way to take on Mola's requetes putting pressure on the Sierra.” This paragraph wherein he makes a veiled reference to Eduardo Val, he having been a waiter for years at the Hotel Ritz and a member of the CNT's Catering Union and, in 1936, secretary of the Defence Committee of the CNT's Centre Region, is indicative of what is to follow. Martínez Reverte sees Eduardo Val, not as a professional waiter but as a CNT “mole” (*emboscado*) hanging around with cheap whores – now if they had been expensive ones, that would have been a different story! – who also claimed to be *milicianas*. This is an indication of the sort of language and literary licence with regard to the CNT in which the author indulges himself; as he states in the very first two lines of his prologue: “I have invested rigour and effort into this book. And, I hope, some talent besides.”

His venom towards Amor Nuño starts on page 28 of the book where he writes: “The anarchists knew that most of these nocturnal slayings were chalked up to their militants. The Director-General of Security, Manuel Muñoz, had called in Gregorio Gallego and Isidro Albert, two leading trade unionists from the Ateneo Libertario in Carabanchel to help him put a stop to the *paseos* in the Pradera. Gallego and Albert had told him that this was not entirely the handiwork of anarchists, that he should look at the Circulo de Bellas Artes Committee of Public Safety on which every political persuasion within the Popular Front was represented. Besides, they argued that it was beyond their capability to use force to stop the perpetrators of such acts from carrying on with them.

A heated argument about the matter erupted at a meeting of anarchist leaders. Gregorio Gallego, Isabelo Romero and others were radically against the enforcement of that sort of justice. Furthermore, Gallego was especially concerned about the procession of women and children turning up every morning to view the corpses. Amor Nuño, “anarchist of visceral instinct” and who served on the local defence committees took the line, however, that rough justice bolstered the people's revolutionary morale and engages it in the life or death struggle upon which we have embarked.

The best they could promise in terms of cooperation with the General Directorate of Security

was to see to it that the matter was looked into at the Bellas Artes, the biggest of Madrid's so-called 'chekas'.

Gregorio Gallego was secretary of the Libertarian Militias encampment in Puente de Toledo. And this was not the only occasion he had had to negotiate with the Director-General of Security over public order issues. Some weeks previously he had fetched some nuns from Toledo for their own safety, they being greatly menaced by the uncontrollables in the city. When he applied to the Directorate for help, the response was that the safest course would be to put them in prison.

"Outside of prison or diplomatic buildings, no guarantees could be offered about anybody's life."

This initial reference by Martínez Reverte, based on information furnished by Gregorio Gallego, is another sample of what happens throughout the book at every mention of Amor Nuño. Albeit that the intensity of the manipulation and misrepresentation escalates as it goes. There is a huge difference between what Gallego wrote in his book *Madrid, Corazón que se desangra* and the summary offered by Martínez Reverte. Let us look at what Gregorio Gallego wrote:

"The Director-General of Security offered us some weapons if we would commit ourselves to rendering this service, but both Isidro and I turned down the suggestion, our view being that it was a job for the government's public order agencies ...

"I came to speak to Manuel Muñoz on a further two occasions during that time. One was when he called me on the phone to ask me to deny access to the Pradera to a number of ambassadors and diplomats who made their way there in a procession under official police escort. The fellow was so worried that he led me to believe that such visits could do irreparable harm to the Republic. I did not doubt what he said but again I stressed to him that the proper procedure was for the Security forces to prevent it ..

"Some hours later, I mentioned the lengthy conversation that I had had with the Director-General of Security to Isabelo Romero, Eduardo Val and Amor Nuño .. Very incidentally we also touched on the matter of the shootings carried out in the Pradera which, whilst they did not cost me any sleep, in that I always got to bed late for whatever sleep I could get, I was intensely upset about the procession of women and children making the pilgrimage every morning to view the corpses. Val and Isabelo Romero were adamantly opposed to any further toleration of this 'paseos' nonsense. Amor Nuño on the other hand reckoned that rough justice boosted the people's revolutionary morale and engaged it with the life or death struggle upon which we had embarked. Of course, no agreement could be reached, but Eduardo Val and Isabelo Romero promised to see to it that investigations into the matter were focused upon the Public Safety Committee of the Bellas Artes Club."

Thus, if we compare what Martínez Reverte has written with what his source, Gregorio Gallego wrote thirty years ago, we find the following:

1. It is not the case that the Director-General of Security called Gallego to get him to stop the paseos in the Pradera and, as a result, that the anarchists knew that such deeds were being attributed to their militants.

2. It is untrue that there was a heated argument at a gathering of leaders. The fact that Gallego mentions that they dealt with the issue of the Pradera only in passing is a clear indication of how much importance was placed on it.

3. Amor Nuño was not on the CNT defence committees: he was secretary of the Local CNT Federation and Martínez Reverte knows this because he makes it his business to repeat it lots of times throughout his book. For his part, Eduardo Val was secretary of the regional defence committee and therefore the defence committee's top man was opposed to the shootings.

4. There is nothing in Gallego's account to validate the conclusion that Amor Nuño was an anarchist of visceral instincts.

5. It was Isabelo Romero and Eduardo Val who promised to take a hand in the matter and not Gallego as Martínez Reverte suggests. Furthermore it is significant that it was Val and Romero because of them was the secretary of defence and the other secretary of the CNT regional committee and, as Martínez Reverte reminds us time and again in his book, Val was the most influential figure and most powerful figure the CNT had in Madrid just then.

As to the matter of the nuns, again we have Martínez Reverte distorting what Gregorio Gallego actually described. It was not Gallego that fetched the nuns from Toledo; they themselves made their way to the encampment: "To Campamento came, not only groups of fugitives from the enemy camp but also groups of people in difficult positions in the republican camp ... One such group was made up of a dozen nuns ... My dealings with them were painful in the extreme. I do not think I have ever come across anybody so cut and dried and unwavering in their convictions ... The solution that Amor Nuño from the Local Federation came up with for me was to put them to work in the collective workshops ... This suggestion was refused by the mother superior rather unthinkingly ... Eduardo Val's secretary, Gerardo, offered to distribute them around the field hospitals as nurses for me. This idea did not strike the mother superior as a bad one but she insisted on the condition that they all serve together in the same hospital, a condition I did not even dare pass on to Gerardo since I was aware of the organisation's instructions on this score: no one was to be harassed or bullied because of their religious beliefs but such institutions and communities were to be regarded as having been disbanded. In view of this I rang the General Directorate of Security for a solution. One of Manuel Muñoz's secretaries - Muñoz himself was out of the office at the time - told me that the only way out he could offer me was prison. That suggestion struck me as so offensive that I snapped back that he could stick it up his ass. But the secretary gave me sufficient grounds to persuade me his suggestion was not in jest nor was he teasing me, but rather was the consequence of the sad fact that the prison was the only place where the Government could guarantee the lives of right-wingers.

"I briefed the nuns on the options .. To my surprise the mother superior plumped for prison without much hesitation." (Gallego, pp. 109-111)

So, according to Gallego, no less, Amor Nuño was the first point of contact and the first to offer a solution for their protection. And so the "anarchist of visceral instincts", Amor Nuño, proved to be a protector of the nuns, there was no negotiation with the General Security Directorate, merely a phone conversation with one of the director's secretaries, the anarchists could and did offer to guarantee the nuns' lives, in addition to which Martínez Reverte mixes up Puerta de Toledo (Madrid) with Toledo - a serious shortcoming in a historian and for anybody born in Madrid. And the attempt to depict Gregorio Gallego as a humanitarian and level-headed type - which he was and still is - and Nuño as an extremist given to violence, is a stark indication of lack of rigour and diligence.

On page 64, ever eager to denigrate Amor Nuño, Martínez Reverte writes the following: "Among the units about to take part in the operation there was a new column with an evocative name, the 'Amor y Libertad', whose five hundred men the anarchist leader Amor Nuño had recruited from among the best union leaders.

Asensio reckoned that a quick surprise raid like that might force the enemy to halt his advance. But the Francoist garrison was well dug in, its positions entrenched around two bridgeheads, Alcántara and San Martín. The operation was a damp squib."

Martínez Reverte does not know or pretends not to know that all of the militia columns,

whether CNT, communist or POUM, or belonging to the Libertarian Youth, the FAI, the International Brigades or any other faction, carried names. Describing the 'Amor y Libertad' title as evocative might as easily be said of the 'Lincoln Column', the 'Karl Marx Division', the 'Del Rosal Column', the 'Tierra y Libertad Column', 'Los Aguiluchos' or any other, but Martínez Reverte makes no reference to their names being "evocative" He also deliberately forgets to mention which other units took part in the operation, but does say that the column was made up of the best union leaders, only to conclude that "the operation was a damp squib", suggesting that only the 'Amor y Libertad' was a damp squib, it and the 'union leaders' who made it up. This is a very clever manipulation through choice of words. And he does not cite any facts to suggest that the best union leaders were enrolled in the 'Amor y Libertad', although we know from the descriptions offered by Gregorio Gallego in his book *Madrid Corazón que se desangra* that the 'Amor y Libertad' column was made up of union members and libertarian youth and he fails to mention that the only union leaders it contained were Amor Nuño and Isidro Albert.

One of the keys to his defamation of Amor Nuño comes as he describes two sittings of the Defence Junta attended by anarchists on 7 and 8 November 1936. When it comes to describing the foundation meeting of the Madrid Defence Junta on 7 November 1936, Martínez Reverte writes (pp. 226-227): "After the meeting a further secret meeting was held between representatives from the JSU who were in charge of Public Order and others from the CNT Local Federation whose militias controlled access roads to the city. They came to an arrangement regarding the prisoners filling the jails of Madrid and about their fate.

The prisoners were to be broken up into three groups. In the case of the first, fascists and dangerous elements. Immediate execution, Concealing the responsibility. The second, made up of prisoners with responsibilities, was to be shipped out to Chinchilla, with 'every guarantee'. Those belonging to the third, non-compromised personnel, were to be set free immediately.

By daybreak the task was already under way. Now the communist police picking out those belonging in the first group would enjoy easy passage through the CNT guards and Milicias de Etapas looking after the exits from Madrid as they made their way to the outskirts and help in shooting the hundreds of men involved.

The closing part of the arrangement was emphatic: 'Concealing the responsibility.' No one was to have proof of the authors of the selective killings.

The organisations which came to the arrangement were led by Santiago Carrillo and Amor Nuño. Both twenty years old. The agreement was to cost hundreds their lives."

This basis for this account is some draft minutes that Martínez Reverte claims to have stumbled upon in the archives of the Fundación Anselmo Lorenzo in Madrid, archives belonging to the CNT's national committee. [Martínez Reverte includes a transcript of said minutes as an appendix to his book, pages 577-581]. In his account of 8 November 1936 he writes as follows (pp. 238-240):

"A crucial meeting opened at ten thirty a.m. on the CNT national committee premises, chaired by national committee member Cardona. A number of local committees as well as the National Defence Committee were present.

"The anarchists were especially worried about the government's decision to quit Madrid and the implications of this for defence. Horacio Prieto, chairman of the National [committee] along with recently appointed ministers Federica Montseny and Juan García Oliver made the decision to accompany Largo Caballero on the trip to Valencia. This had caused serious problems with the rank and file. At the same time there a sense that victory was near. Quite a few anarchists were on the streets shouting 'Long may Madrid live without government!', a cry that was to be so distasteful to

premier Largo Caballero.

“At the meeting the decision was made to agree to the National Committee’s remaining in Madrid, with only a representation of it in Valencia so as to coordinate with the government.

“But the pressing point at issue was the defence of the city and the coordination of the efforts of the recently established Junta chaired by Miaja.

“Eduardo Val chaired the regional defence committee and at that point was the keystone figure among Madrid’s anarchists. It was he that gave briefings on things at the front and who persuaded all present of the importance of the establishment of the Junta. His analysis of the ambassadors’ remaining in Madrid was unanswerable: they were refusing to go because of the numbers of fascists on their premises under the protection of diplomatic immunity. The previous day it had been very hard keeping in check the comrades bent on storming the Chilean legation. But the diplomatic corps had to be treated correctly. Which was why they meant to accede to their request for a standing guard, continually manned by the same men; these would be the anarchist militias.

“And a further concession was to be made to the diplomats: from the prisoner list agreed with the JSU separately from the Defence Junta those detainees with no charges to answer were to be quickly released ‘with every sort of assurance by way of parading our humanitarianism before the embassies.’

“What agreement was he talking about? The representatives from the Local Federation reported the arrangement they had agreed with the JSU the day before regarding those in preventive custody, the ones with whom so many political leaders were obsessed, the ones that might serve as the basis for a fascist army should they be set free by Varela’s troops. Of the three lists agreed, the third, the one relating to prisoners facing no charges was the one that would set the ambassadors’ minds at rest.

“The full agreement with the JSU for the liquidation of dangerous persons and fascists and for transferring the less threatening ones to the rearguard was spelled out by Amor Nuño, secretary of the Local Federation who had been appointed to represent the CNT on the Defence Junta with responsibility for industry. Amor Nuño was surrounded by very tough guys and backed by members of the Libertarian Youth’s peninsular committee which had been joined by a squad of very violent Andalusians.

“Melchor Rodríguez who had been appointed director of Prisons by the Revolutionary Junta of the College of Advocates, listened to the report. His steadfast opposition to executions of prisoners is not recorded in the minutes.”

A few pages further on, in a description of 8 November 1936, Martínez Reverte writes (p.246): “Ramón Torrecilla was one of the policemen assigned to mopping up the fifth column. That day he was part of a squad that started on its sinister handiwork at ten o'clock that night. Some hours of vigilance and heavy toil lay ahead. According to Serrano Poncela he was placed in charge of picking out the prisoners due to be taken out that night to be shot. He had to split them into four groups, based on their calling: servicemen, academics, aristocrats and a batch of ‘miscellaneous’. It was demanding work. Four hundred and fourteen prisoners were to perish before the firing squads in Torrejón de Ardoz.

“No picket from the Milicias de Etapa to whom control of the exits from the capital had been consigned bothered them. They were acting under orders from the Public Order or War departments. Both were controlled by the JSU. The controls that the anarchists might have set up off their own bat would be taken down under orders from Amor Nuño from the Local Federation of Trade Unions.”

These are some of the most telling pages in Martínez Reverte's book when it comes to pinning blame on the CNT and Amor Nuño. Martínez Reverte tells us that the Milicias de Etapas had charge of checkpoints on the exits from Madrid and that they came under the control of the Public Order department (headed by Carrillo) or the War department. However, in his recent article in *El País* (5 November 2006) he is no longer happy with this and asserts the opposite, that “the communists needed the libertarians because the latter controlled the Milicias de Etapas.”

In the section given over to 17 November 1936, Martínez Reverte writes (pp. 300-301): “There were upwards of five hundred shootings over the three days, 7 8 and 9 [November].

“That day, however, saw a fresh phase of ‘sacas’ unbeknownst to the prisoners. They knew only one thing: that some of them were called out that morning and nothing more was ever heard of them. But those who had been acting as executioners were in a state of enforced idleness because, from the 10th onwards, an anarchist by the name of Melchor Rodríguez had been appointed director-general of Prisons and refused to allow any prisoner to be taken from prison other than under his supervision.

“But Rodríguez, driven to it by pressures, was to resign and that was to reopen the way to the systematic, organised slaughter of prisoners. From the PCE, with the connivance of Amor Nuño, from the Local Federation of Trade Unions and its tough collaborators, effective work was being done to put an end to the ‘checas’ and to ‘paseos’ [sic]. But this did not apply to the ‘sacas’?

“Who got Rodríguez to step down? His comrade Juan García Oliver, the minister of Justice. Like other anarchist ministers, García Oliver differed significantly from Rodríguez: the latter wanted to save everybody, but a hard line had to be taken vis a vis the most dangerous ones. The anarchists were against the death penalty which was contrary to their thinking; but they could not have been blind to the real risks of setting so many fascists free. For García Oliver it looked like a quantitative problem. For Melchor Rodríguez it was a qualitative matter. Those prisoners in preventive custody could not be removed without authority. That was his bottom line. Which is why he was forced into resigning. Because Rodríguez knew, since he had been at the 8 November meeting, what fate awaited those prisoners listed as belonging to category one of the detainees, the ‘fascists and dangerous persons’”.

The prisoners were oblivious to all this. They knew nothing of the fate of their comrades who had been transferred. Nor did they know that fresh lists were to be drawn up the following day, that the double-decker buses making the trip to Alcalá but very rarely entering the city would be back in action. Some two thousand men were to perish, shot in Paracuellos or Torrejón between 6 November and 6 December.”

The paragraphs above are something short of the exacting historical endeavours to which he alludes in his prologue. Let us examine a few of the contradictions:

So, Amor Nuño was culpable in the executions, was he? Or was he carrying out effective efforts to put an end to the ‘checas’ and ‘paseos’ (the latter meaning executions, remember)? Is there anybody out there who can fathom this contradiction? The very man accused of responsibility for the killings is the man eager to put an end to the ‘checas’ and ‘paseos’? And what is the difference between ‘sacas’ and ‘paseos’? The numbers killed and the place from where they were drawn? Why would Amor Nuño have made a distinction between the dead and been so keen to carry out effective efforts to halt the ‘checas’ and the ‘paseos’? Then again: how can the term ‘connivance’ be used in this context? That word has negative connotations and in the context where protective action is being talked about, that word – connivance – is out of place.

How can he say that in Paracuellos and Torrejón the killings started on 6 November and then turn around and claim that the secret meeting in which Nuño allegedly was a participant was

held on the night of 7 November? Meaning that the killings in Paracuellos were going on before the meeting, in which case Nuño could not have been an accessory to nor responsible for them, in spite of which Martínez Reverte argues again and again that Nuño was responsible. Martínez Reverte skims over the killings on the 6th and 7th, but it is worth dwelling a little on these. Burnett Bolloten uses a quotation from Herbert Matthews which is very pertinent in showing that neither CNT nor Amor Nuño had any hand in the executions. He states: “On 6 November and on the night of 7-8 November 1936, when the fate of Madrid still hung in the balance, roughly a thousand prisoners were taken from the Modelo Prison and massacred in Madrid and other surrounding towns ... I believe that the orders came from Comintern agents in Madrid because I know that the sinister Vittorio Vidali (aka Carlos Contreras in Spain, aka Enea Sormenti in the United States) spent the night in one prison briefly questioning prisoners who were brought before him and when he determined, as was the custom, that they were fifth columnists, he would put a bullet into the back of their heads from his pistol.” (Herbert L. Matthews, *Half Spain Died*, p. 120, quoted by Bolloten, p. 373). So Matthews identified one of the killers as belonging to the ranks of the communists. Significant also here are the memoirs of Juan García Oliver who, on the afternoon of 6 November attended his very first cabinet meeting over two sessions, one on 5 and one on 6 November. In his memoirs the anarchist minister García Oliver provides important information helping to clarify the killings at the Modelo prison and in Paracuellos. It is very striking that Martínez Reverte has not consulted these memoirs even though he opens his prologue by announcing: “I have invested rigour and effort into this book. And I hope, a degree of talent, besides.” These memoirs are crucial for several reasons: first, because García Oliver was minister of Justice at the time of the Paracuellos killings; secondly, he was responsible for Melchor Rodríguez's appointment as director-general of prisons; thirdly and more importantly, because he has information to offer on other individuals implicated in these events. García Oliver reached Madrid on the afternoon of 4 November and his first cabinet meeting was held at 4.00 p.m. on 5 November and it finished with no decision made as to whether to move to Valencia. After that meeting, García Oliver spoke with Eduardo Val at the Defence Committee's premises on the Calle Serrano. At that meeting, Val told García Oliver: “I too would like to help you out. I want to alert you to the chicanery of the communist Margarita Nelken who, as head of a committee of the Unified Socialist Youth, has assumed executive justice powers in Madrid. She operates under cover of a small office at the Ministry of War. Be careful with those around her: most of them are young Assault Guards in plain clothing.” (García Oliver, p. 306). The following day (6 November) at 4.00 p.m. a follow-up sitting of the cabinet began at which the CNT ministers, following talks with Horacio M. Prieto, gave their consent to the government's removal to Valencia. After that cabinet meeting which took less than an hour, since García Oliver arrived at the Ministry of War at five o'clock, he had an interview with Margarita Nelken. In his memoirs *El eco de los pasos* (1978, pp. 309-311), García Oliver has this to say of their meeting: “Through Ángel Galarza, the interior minister, word had been passed to Nelken that I wanted to talk to her. Galarza passed on the message and told me the location and time of our appointment. I have no idea whether my interest in Nelken attracted Galarza's attention, but I imagine it did, because he was one of the cleverer socialists, quick on the uptake that I met in those days and I imagine he was not unaware of the rumours concerning what Nelken was at and the trail of glory left in their wake by the squads of unified young socialists that she led, whether on the say-so of communist leaders or because she was keen to imitate the Left Social Revolutionaries of the Russian revolution, among whom female activists such as Perovskaya and Spiridonova had wielded such clout in the past. “So you are the famous man of action. You have no idea how I have always wanted to make your

acquaintance and those of your comrades Ascaso and Durruti besides.

“It’s nice – I replied – that you acknowledge my status rather than seeing me as the gunman as many claim me to be. As for myself, having learnt what you are doing, I too am delighted to get some idea of what the Russian socialists must have been like once they had shrugged off their nihilist chrysalis.

“Ah! Nelken exclaimed, I see you are familiar with the nuances by which the various schools of socialism were broken down. Galarza told me over the phone that you were very eager to speak to me. I would ask you not to offer me any position in your ministry.

“I am very delighted with the clever way in which you got to the point about my wanting to talk to you. I am not offering you any position. I am merely here to ask you to steer clear of anything relating to justice. From this day forth, that falls under my remit. And mine alone.

“And if should decide to carry on regardless?

“Then I would suggest at a full cabinet meeting that they give you the post of Justice minister and me the post of War minister, which would certainly match our personalities better.

“I know you are capable of doing so. I can assure you that it will not be necessary. I will do all in my power to assist you in your difficult task of dampening the flames of the revolution.

“As an intellectual of note and a socialist activist of many years’ standing, do you think you are making the revolution with these night-time pursuits of yours?

“I can see that you are the fearsome debater they warned me about. That’s the only way you could have overcome Ángel Pestaña. The poor fellow, in his role as a syndicalist politician, has lost big-time.

“Her opinion of Ángel Pestaña, erstwhile leader of the CNT following Seguí’s death, made me think of Margarita Nelken on a par with 'La Pasionaria'. The top job in the CNT had fallen into Pestaña's lap easily after the CNT membership was left orphaned by the assassination of El Noi del Sucre.

“Margarita Nelken, a well educated intellectual, was unique in the Marxist camp. But the October 1934 rebellion had hoisted another woman, proletarian in origin and lifestyle, into pride of place: La Pasionaria.

“Just as Ángel Pestaña's position of leadership in a revolutionary organisation in perpetual upheaval was beyond him from the outset, the upshot being that he would finish up cowed and tacitly bowing out, so Nelken, the female leader maxima, without the thrust of the people to back her up, is supposed to have stepped back to allow La Pasionaria to rise to the top. But, being conversant with nihilism, the Russian Left SRs and the German Spartakists, she made an effort to match Spiridonova, Perovskaya and Luxemburg, taking the wrong road by embarking on the path of maverick terrorist action which, as she herself put it to me, began with the slaughter of the right-wingers held in the Modelo prison in Madrid and carried on over several nights of horror as she fought, in her own way against the bloody banditry of the fifth column.

“I have always felt sorry for the losers. I feel sorry for Margarita Nelken. And not until I came to write memoirs 37 years later would I disclose what she was about.”

Martínez Reverte makes no mention at all of Margarita Nelken, except to say that she had the ability to inspire (see p. 220). Judging by what García Oliver had to say, Martínez Reverte's documentary sources are flimsy and he has a lot more research to do down that avenue. And both Val and García Oliver offer interesting clues as to who the members of those execution squads might have been: young Assault Guards from the Unified Socialist Youth. Also important is the information offered by Felix Schlayer in his book *Diplomat im rotten Madrid* (1938); he too has not been consulted by Martínez Reverte although his book is a crucial one. Felix Schlayer has this to

say:

“On the morning of the 7th I picked up the Red Cross Committee delegate and together we drove to the Modelo prison ... In the square which was sealed off by barricades there was a large number of buses ... I tried to make contact with the Governor but was told that he had been at the ministry from early that morning.

“I sought out the deputy governor and asked him what all the parked buses meant. He answered that they had arrived to transfer about a hundred and twenty officers to Valencia to prevent their falling into the clutches of the Nationalists. Apart from that there was no more news ... Outside in the yard I bumped into the main ‘political boss’ in that prison, an elderly communist, a railwayman by trade ... He confirmed for me exactly what the deputy governor had said and put the excessive number of buses for just a hundred and twenty prisoners down to the fact that they were due to pick up servicemen from other prisons. As yet he had no idea when they would start to board the buses.

“We then went with the Red Cross delegate to the Women’s Prison where everything was fine and from there we went on to the General Directorate where, by contrast, chaos prevailed. The previous night, the government had secretly decamped to Valencia, and with it the Director-General, Manuel Muñoz, a man who needed branding. When I asked who now in Madrid was in charge of public order, the answer I got was that it appeared to be Margarita Nelken (socialist deputy, Jewish, of German-French extraction) in that she had been ensconced in the Director-General's office from that morning. No one, though, had any hard and fast, official information. I asked to be allowed to speak to her but, after a time, I was told that she had left. My reckoning was that she did not want her face to be seen ... Off we went, bent on finding Margarita Nelken ... we looked for her at the Casa del Pueblo ... at the Interior ministry and other agencies but could find her nowhere ... At the Chilean Embassy I was approached by a foreign lady with a fantastic suggestion: the Madrid College of Advocates was ready to make its own militia available to the diplomatic corps for the guarding of the prisons. I should go there and negotiate with these people. I went and, yes, I was given verbal reassurances but there was nothing to indicate practical preparations ... I thought of the worrying number of buses parked in Moncloa and after a bite to eat I set off again in my search for ‘boss’ Nelken, even going to her private residence where, naturally, no one had set eyes on her that day ... So we gave up on the fruitless search for ‘madame’ Nelken and deduced to get our information directly from the recently appointed supreme commander, namely, Miaja, at the War ministry. ..”

Meanwhile it was six o'clock by then and I was troubled by a fresh presentiment as to what might happen at the Modelo prison. When I made my way there in utter darkness and set foot in the yard ... the governor came racing straight up to me and said: ‘They’ve taken him with them! I wasn’t here. I’ve just got back from the ministry!’ He was referring to the lawyer from my legation, Ricardo de la Cierva, in whom I had shown such a strong interest. He then proceeded to tell me that on previous nights he had had hours-long confrontations with militians who had shown up to take him away, arguing with them and trying to rescue him and it had even come down to their threatening one another at gunpoint. On this occasion, though, that had been ruled out as he had had to be away all day at the ministry. When I pressed him and pressed him for details, his answer to me was that several hundred prisoners had been collected for relocation to San Miguel de los Reyes prison in Valencia under instructions from the General Directorate. They had been handed over to a communist by the name of Ángel Rivera, who had brought the orders ... I could not stay there any longer. Once more I had to pick up the Red Cross delegate to go see the new police authority, as we had arranged between us. The man in question was Santiago Carrillo. We and he

had a very long talk and we received all manner of well-meaning promises and expressions of humane intent about protecting the prisoners and ending murderous activity. But the final impression we took away from the interview was one of total unreliability and lack of sincerity. I told him what I had just heard in Moncloa and asked him for an explanation. Carrillo claimed to know nothing of the whole affair, which struck me as utterly unlikely, as evident in the fact that during the night and over the following day shipments of prisoners drawn from the jails continued, for all his hollow promises. They continued without either Miaja or Carrillo lifting a finger; and above all, without their being able to persist in arguing that they were unaware of the facts on which we had just given a briefing.” (Schlayer, pp. 118-124)

“By the time I got home at about nine o’clock, I found that I had a message from another of the foreign legations. Informing me that from the prison they had had a message meant for me according to which Ricardo de la Cierva was at liberty ... I jumped into the car and at about ten o’clock headed back to the prison to seek further details ... I was informed that in two expeditions in the course of the night a large number of inmates had been taken away; they had been led out in pairs, tied to each other at the elbows and that they had not been allowed to bring along any belongings.”

And among them was Ricardo de la Cierva ...I left the prison once again at about eleven o’clock...

“In order to get to the bottom of the matter, off I went the following morning to see the Modelo prison governor again...I discovered that overnight there had been two expeditions from there under the same suspicious circumstances...The governor, by way of excusing himself to me, showed me a piece of paper on which the deputy director of the General Security Directorate ordered him in writing, complete with signature, to surrender to the bearer of that note the nineteen hundred and seventy prisoners to be singled out by the latter for relocation to the San Miguel de los Reyes prison in Valencia. I have it that said orders had been issued by word of mouth to the deputy director by the Director General of Security on the night of 6-7 November, before he scarpered, and that this was the price that this Director General piece of trash paid to the communists who were watching him, so that they would let him get away.”

So, both García Oliver and Schlayer offer confirmation that the initial executions were carried out on the 6th and that Margarita Nelken was connected with them. The CNT had nothing to do with all this, nor, of course, did Amor Nuño. Martínez Reverte is oblivious to all this information in his book but he is not oblivious of the information furnished by Jesús Galindez of the Basque Nationalist Party (PNV) who, while in exile, published a book in which he wrote: “On the night of 6 November the files on some six hundred prisoners in the Modelo prison were scrupulously examined and, once it has been established that they were fascists, they were executed (on the 7th) in the small town of Paracuellos de Jarama. Two nights later a further four hundred. Total: 1,020.”

Martínez Reverte himself acknowledged this in his article in *El País* (5 November 2006) when he wrote: “It was eight o’clock on the morning of 7 November 1936. The ritual began again on the afternoon of that very same day.” In spite of which he insists that the CNT was to blame, when, according to himself (in his book) the supposed meeting between the JSU members and the CNT members did not take place until that night. Nevertheless, in his article he shifts the date of the establishment of the Defence Junta and brings it forward by one day, skipping from the night of 7 November to the night of 6 November: “Even so, Miaja had to spend time forming a new government for the city out of political parties. He did so beginning at ten o’clock in the morning on the 6th and the meeting, plentifully interrupted by the need to monitor the fighting, dragged on into the wee small hours of the morning.” That way he can make it all fit together as, by bringing

the establishment of the Junta forward by a day, the alleged meeting between the JSU and CNT councillors could have happened ahead of the executions. But the facts and the documentary record are stubborn and fail to accommodate Martínez Reverte. The well-documented book by Aróstegui and Martínez (1984), in which the minutes of the Defence Junta meetings are included, show the exact opposite.

Dealing with the case of the incident in which Yagüe, the Madrid Defence Junta's Commissar for Supplies was wounded on 20 December 1936, Martínez Reverte writes this (pp. 456-458): "The Unified Socialist Youth delegate Santiago Carrillo who was in charge of Public Order reported that he had ordered the arrest of those responsible. But they retreated into a libertarian *ateneo*. The guards had insisted that the wanted men were under the protection of the CNT regional committee led by David Antona, one of the libertarians most hostile to communists. Carrillo had had to send in a company of Assault Guards to ensure that his orders were carried out.

"Carrillo came up with a take-it or leave-it proposition: those responsible had to be punished. Delay was out of the question; there was no time to waste on judges and courts when faced with matters that posed such a grave threat to the Junta's authority. And it was up to the Junta to determine the punishment. Carrillo proposed that they be shot. Summarily executed.

"The libertarian representatives were in a bind. Amor Nuño expressed his regrets for what had happened and stated that his health would not permit him to carry on serving on the Junta and so he had asked for a replacement to be appointed. Lorenzo Iñigo was all for matters being sorted out between the UGT and the CNT, with the Junta keeping its nose out in that it did not have the authority to intervene.

"But the CNT's provincial committee issued a note in which it deplored what had happened and condemned it. Two days after that the National Committee was to do likewise.

"The ailment that Amor Nuño cited as behind his resignation from his post on the Junta was non-existent. A very few days before, a meeting of confederal militants from the CNT, FAI and Libertarian Youth had expelled him from the anarchist movement. Cipriano Mera in the flesh had seized him by the scruff of the neck, given him a shake and thrown him against the wall, telling him that he deserved to die. Some of the people there even debated whether or not he should be shot out of hand. One of those present was Gregorio Gallego.

"Amor Nuño's fault was a very grave one: he had become sexually entangled with a woman whose behaviour was very brazen and provocative, the daughter of a rebel serviceman. The libertarians reckoned that she was a spy working for the Francoists and that she had him brain-washed. Nuño had been taking her along to important meetings where she had been able to learn the contents of hush-hush discussions.

"He had saved his skin but had been expelled from the libertarian movement. They had labelled him a traitor and dubbed him a fascist and threatened him. And he must have realised that the wisest policy was for him to disappear as soon as he could.

"Amor Nuño, secretary of the Local Federation which had come to an arrangement with the top echelons of the JSU on liquidating the prisoners, was to vanish without trace once he had stepped down from his post on the Delegate Defence Junta.

"His actual ailment was fear. A very reasonable fear.

"At about this time a people's court had passed a death sentence on an anarchist, José Olmeda, for outrages committed in the church of El Carmen. Olmeda had been turned in by the recently resigned Amor Nuño who had stumbled upon the ghastly trade the former had carried out in the El Carmen church: disinterring corpses and placing them on public display in return for money."

As in earlier instances, Martínez Reverte is again mistaken in many of the claims made in the extract above and it is deplorable that somebody purporting to write an objective, impartial history should make so many significant mistakes and misrepresent the information contained within the minutes. Among these errors we might cite the following:

1. On the date in question, David Antona was not the head of the regional committee; its secretary was Isabelo Romero.

2. The first person to suggest shooting was Dieguez, the communist representative at the War Department, after which Carrillo joined in (see the minutes in Aróstegui and Martínez, 1984)

3. Amor Nuño did indeed deplore what had happened to Yagüe (ibidem). And on this count we have important information to hand:

“[Nuño] added that , for personal reasons, due to his physical condition and for the purposes of efficient discharge, he was obliged to step down from the Junta. This did not mean to say that the CNT was pulling out, merely that as he would no longer be serving as its delegate and would be at home, the Organisation should appoint another comrade who had already been chosen and that all he needed to do was to turn up: this being the case, the outgoing delegate asked whether he might go on speaking as he had to date: for it was his opinion that he had no authority so to do.

“THE GENERAL [Miaja] replied by stating that in his view comrade Nuño had slighted him, because, rather than handing his resignation from his post to the Party Committee, he ought to have handed it to him, in that he had always had oversight of everything and thus reckoned that they should have looked to him in this matter also.

“NUÑO conceded that he had been guilty of lack of consideration where the General was concerned.

“CARRILLO stated that the CNT could not remain aloof from the matter raised that night because it was of great importance and that the CNT representatives in particular had a duty to express their view on the matter. Comrade NUÑO had spelled out his personal circumstances to us: I too have tendered my resignation to the GENERAL and until such time as my representative comes I shall stick with the Junta and I reckon that NUÑO has every authority to deal with the matter ... He believed in all sincerity that comrade NUÑO's words were not merely a formulaic condemnation but a heartfelt condemnation; and believed too that the CNT had not authorised these things and was opposed to them.” But we know from these minutes that Carrillo had earlier stepped down from participating in the Junta and that he had told Miaja, which also suggests that he had stepped down before Amor Nuño and we know too that neither Nuño's words nor his personal circumstances were being queried but we also know that on the Junta “The General [Miaja] congratulated him and spoke of his feelings regarding comrade Nuño's having to step down from the Junta.” No such expression of congratulations or feelings were expressed regarding Carrillo. It is important that we note, and here the records of the Junta confirm this, that Carrillo was not present at the 1 December, 12 December or 27 December sessions of the Junta, but only at the 23 December meeting, by which point he had already tendered his resignation to Miaja, as is confirmed by Carrillo himself; and that he was not present at the subsequent December meetings. Martínez Reverte, in a further distortion, postdates the Carrillo resignation to 1 January 1937 and depicts it in these terms: “Kléber's was not the only important hand-over that day [1 January] on the republican side. Carrillo quit the Delegate Defence Junta in protest, albeit without fuss, over the way in which the Yagüe incident had been resolved.” (p. 492) This, as we have been able to show, is a lie.

4. The CNT did not have and never did have a provincial committee, so none could have issued any note. There was the Madrid Local Federation, the Regional Committee of the Centre

and the National Committee. What we have here is a display of ignorance of the organisational structure and modus operandi of the CNT, something which is vital if one is to be able to “objectively” make the allegations he wishes to make.

5. Martínez Reverte is so focused on his goal of making a (false) allegation that he is blinded to the contradiction there is in stating simultaneously that Amor Nuño was expelled from the libertarian movement a few days earlier and that he was still representing the CNT on the Madrid Defence Junta. This is tantamount to treating the CNT like a crew of nitwits who expel a militant and rain all sorts of allegations (e.g. ‘fascist’) and threats upon him, only to allow him to carry on representing them on the highest governing body in Madrid and offering apologies on their behalf. And, what is worse, he has Lorenzo Iñigo looking stupid and complicit with Amor Nuño in not denouncing his presence there after he had been expelled: besides, from the minutes we know that Amor Nuño had tendered his resignation to the Organisation ahead of the meeting of the Junta, but we also know from the minutes of 27 December that he attended that Junta meeting as the CNT’s representative; or, and it amounts to the same thing, that four days after what Martínez Reverte claims was his resignation, Nuño was still representing the CNT. But to cap it all we have Cipriano Mera's memoirs as well; forty years on from the outbreak of the civil war, when Mera comes to speak of Amor Nuño, he describes him as a comrade and has not a single negative word to say about him. Had Mera regarded Nuño as a traitor or fascist or someone who had been expelled from the libertarian movement, not only would he not have talked about such a person as a ‘comrade’ but he would have shed some light on what happened. By contrast, when in his memoirs Mera alludes to conversation he had with Amor Nuño on 19 July on the premises of the Local Federation, he does so in the following terms:

“Comrade Amor Nuño who was serving secretary of the Local Federation, gave us our very first mission. From what he told us it looked like there was a sizable arms cache in a palace on the Castellana. We made our way there and came upon a large number of looters making off with whatever took their fancy, without any supervision at all. We took charge, convincing them that what we were about was changing capitalist rule and creating a fairer society: that with the people making revolution, there could be no countenancing of the slightest thing resembling common, vulgar criminality by conscience-less persons out to seize or destroy assets that would be needed for the defence of the revolution that was just starting. And we added that killing somebody out of hand, even should he be a marqués, was not the way to make revolution.

“We headed back to the Local Federation to report on our mission. We asked comrade Nuño to fill us in on the situation and assign us a combat posting. He said that he himself had not heard any very serious reports; that the military had seized control of Melilla. Seville, Cadiz, Valladolid, Ávila, Segovia and a few other provincial capitals, but that there was fighting in the streets of Barcelona and the assumption was that in a few short hours the CNT would be in control of the situation: so [Barcelona] could be assumed to be already in the people’s hands.

“As to Madrid — he continued — there are fears that the rebels will revolt tomorrow at the Montaña barracks and in Cuatro Vientos and may seize control in Carabanchel and Leganés.

“We also asked Nuño what the government’s attitude was to the CNT and he told us that the latter had been asked for its cooperation, but that to date the government had steered clear of issuing guns, not just to the CNT, but to the people at large. It was two o’clock in the morning by then and we parted.” (Mera, 1976, pp. 17-18),

Going by those words, it does not look as if Mera regarded Nuño as a traitor some forty years later; indeed, he regarded him as significant enough to merit inclusion in his memoirs. Of course, Martínez Reverte does not know this, not having read Mera’s memoirs.

6. At the time the Junta met, Amor Nuño was still secretary of the Local Federation and besides, as we shall see, at no time was he ever expelled from the libertarian movement. According to Martínez Reverte's own informant, Gregorio Gallego (pp. 275-276), following the Junta meeting: "Amor Nuño was obliged to step down at a Plenum of CNT militants. He was accused of 'not having been up to the mark'. At one point in the discussion, Mera upbraided him 'for not being worthy to represent the workers of the CNT". That elastic accusation was baseless. Forever changing, Amor Nuño had switched from hero to swain, nothing unusual in a young man in favour of free love. However, certain rumours had reached Mera's ears to the effect that Amor Nuño was turning up in the factories and workshops, swanking it, and accompanied by his secretary, a pretty girl who made no secret of the influence she wielded over him. Apparently he was so head-over-heels in love that he was forgetting to attend Junta meetings at which resolutions damaging to the organisation he represented were passed."

Gregorio Gallego made it his business to defend Amor Nuño and point out that Mera's accusation was baseless. From a painstaking analysis of the Defence Junta minutes furnished by Aróstegui and Martínez (1984) it can be shown that Amor Nuño was one of the council members with the best record of attendance at meetings between 7 November and 27 December, at which latter date he stepped down. 28 meetings were held during this period and of the 18 members of the Junta, only three — Carreno, Yagüe and Dieguez — attended more meetings and another 14 attended fewer. The respective attendance rates for those three were 89%, 81% and 75%, with Amor Nuño's attendance rate standing at 64%. Nuno was also the best attender out of the libertarian representatives, since Enrique García, Mariano García Cascales and Antonio Oñate had attendance rates of 36%, 40% and 53% respectively. Furthermore a number of his absences from meetings were condoned by the Junta in that he was away on trips relating to the portfolio he held on the Junta. Moreover, the libertarians do not say what Martínez Reverte has to say regarding Amor Nuño, that "he had become sexually entangled with a woman whose behaviour was very brazen and provocative, the daughter of a rebel serviceman. The libertarians reckoned that she was a spy working for the Francoists and that she had him brain-washed. Nuño had been taking her along to important meetings where she had been able to learn the contents of hush-hush discussions." On the contrary: they state that she was pretty and that Nuño was forgetting to turn up for meetings, not that he was bringing her along to meetings. The language used to describe Nuño's sweetheart here is very striking. Gallego describes her as a 'girl' but Martínez Reverte turns her into a 'woman', Gallego describes her as 'provocative', but Martínez Reverte describes her behaviour as 'brazen'. Gallego describes him as having been accompanied by his secretary and head-over heels in love, but Martínez Reverte depicts him as 'sexually entangled'. And as a finishing touch, Martínez Reverte chips in the comment that she was the daughter of a rebel serviceman, that she had brain-washed Nuño and that Nuño had brought her along to important meetings. Those words are reminiscent of the two opening pages of the book where Martínez Reverte refers to CNT personnel posing as waiters and to cheap prostitutes.

But now to more important and telling matters. For a start, Amor Nuño had not saved his skin because it was never in danger, nor was he expelled from the libertarian movement, nor had he scuttled away. There is no truth in the claim that "he was to vanish without trace once he had stepped down from his position on the Delegate Defence Junta. His real affliction was fear. A very reasonable fear." Iñíguez (2001) offers us signposts to Amor Nuño's career as a militant. Thus, he tells us that in April 1937 Nuño was elected (by the Centre Regional) on to the secretariat of the National Transport Industry Federation, moved to Barcelona and was arrested on 4 May 1937

during the notorious May Events. So Nuño was still holding significant office in the CNT in 1937. True, he was to go missing in late June 1939, but this was because he was murdered, beaten to death by Francoist troops in the Interior Ministry in Madrid, a fate that was not to be shared by Santiago Carrillo, Claudín or the upper echelons of the JSU or PCE. We know from three separate documentary sources that Amor Nuño perished in the cells of the Ministry of the Interior. The first is Eduardo de Guzmán's book *Nosotros, los asesinos*, published in 1974. On p. 101 of the book, Malsa, a CNT comrade who subsequently hanged himself in the jail in Madrid's Calle de Almagro, briefs De Guzmán, Leiva and others on Amor Nuño's fate:

“From what they told me the day I was brought here, comrade Amor Nuño was one of a number beaten to death at the Interior Ministry.

“We feel for the death of Amor Nuño, even though it comes as no surprise, given what we have been witnessing. Amor Nuño, a young, clever, energetic militant had been appointed by the CNT to the first Madrid Defence Junta on the morning of 7 November 1936.”

Two years after that, José Leiva, who had been secretary of the Libertarian Youth and a member of the Madrid Local CNT Federation back in 1939, also alludes to Amor Nuño's death in his own book *Memorias de un condenado a muerte* (pp. 64-65), but he has some interesting details to add:

“Fatalism and despair gnawed with increased fury at all our minds. A rumour was spreading inwards from the gates to the Port. The ‘Littorio’ Division had entered the city of Alicante. Groups of Italians had been spotted dragging a small artillery piece, positioning it facing the gate leading to the Port. The women and children began to cry. Instinctively, folk near the gates were stampeding inside, as if huddling near the embarkation point might wipe out the enemy's real presence. We began to hear voices coming from outside, cheering and applauding Franco's troops. A heavy, menacing silent laden with agony overpowered the place which was now an ‘International Zone’ no longer, but a prison. At which point a tide of selflessness swept through all of the folk in the shipping offices, all of those who had been picked out for evacuation on the first available sailing. A friend of mine clambered on to the roof of a car and delivered a stirring harangue. He said that now that our pain had reached its peak, we had to unite as never before, take more pride in our ideals and confront the same destiny, the same quirk of fate. He ripped up his own boarding pass and cried ‘Long live freedom!’, his voice breaking with emotion. I could feel the tears running down my cheeks. A miraculous recovery of morale had taken place on contact with stark reality, at the ultimate moment of truth. I could feel my entire confidence in the authenticity of human potential flooding back. The friend who had delivered that speech, Amor Nuño, was shot a little while later.”

Finally, in an article published in the review *Tiempo de Historia* in 1978, Eduardo de Guzmán offers further details, pointing out that other Defence Junta members - Mariano García Cascales and José Cazorla - were also shot. Eduardo de Guzmán writes:

“Besides these, the political party and trade union organisation leaders who perished in front of the firing squads during those years are numbered in the thousands. Among the many to perish that way we might cite the names of ... three members of the November 1936 Madrid Defence Junta, the communist José Cazorla and the CNT's Mariano García Cascales, who were shot, and the CNT's Amor Nuño, done to death at the General Security Directorate.” (1978, *Tiempo de Historia*, No 41, April)

Secondly, it is very telling that whereas he brings up Amor Nuño's name time and time again and accuses him of arranging the killings, not once does Martínez Reverte mention the fact that such an arrangement - if there was one - had been made with Santiago Carrillo and José Cazorla. Nor is

Carrillo dubbed a coward for fleeing Spain in 1939, dropping out of sight until 1976.

Thirdly, the José Olmeda episode is a significant signal that Nuño was no coward but rather a man of libertarian persuasions.

Fourthly, Nuño founded the 'Amor y Libertad' (Love and Liberty) Column and marched off with it to the front lines and served there until he was withdrawn by decision of the Local Federation in order to take charge of the Production (later War Industries) Department. It is hard to think of somebody who marches off to the front to do battle as a coward. And if that is a coward, what are we to make of the JSU leaders who never once served on the front, people like Carrillo or Claudín? But he does not call them cowards in his book. On the contrary: he states: "He [Carrillo] and the communist Fernando Claudín had become two mainstays of the resistance to the Francoist onslaught." (p. 542). It is important to note that Claudín is cited only twice in the entire book, the occasion above and another when it is stated that he orchestrated a radio broadcast featuring communist poets. So why the high praises? Orchestrating a radio broadcast does not make anybody a mainstay of the anti-Francoist resistance.

And now, having dealt with the main paragraphs that Martínez Reverte devotes to his effort to prove that the CNT and Amor Nuño were implicated in the Paracuellos slaughter, the time has come for a thorough exploration of the minutes. According to those minutes as transcribed by Martínez Reverte, the meeting was attended by the National Committee (CN) representative, named as Cardona, by the Local Federation (FL), the Centre Regional Committee (CRC), the Regional Defence Committee (CRD), the National Committee of the FNIF (National Rail Industrial Federation), the National Defence Committee (CND), the Peninsular Committee of the Iberian Libertarian Youth Federation (CP FIJL), the managing editor of *CNT*, the National Committee's Propaganda Bureau and comrades Inestal and Antona. So 11 people were present at the meeting. Four are named from the outset: Cardona (from the CN), Inestal, Antona and García Pradas (managing editor of *CNT*). A further two are named at the beginning of the minutes: Diezhandino (recording secretary at the meeting) and Trigo (secretario de palabras for the meeting). There is another one who is easily identifiable as Eduardo Val, the secretary of the CRD and whose name appears on p. 578 of the minutes. So now we have seven of the 11 identified. In addition and according to the minutes (p. 578) (Serafín) Aliaga, (Juan José) Luque (Argente) and comrade Enrique (García, from the Madrid Local Federation, standing in for Amor Nuño on the Defence Junta) also took part in the meeting. And on p. 579 we find the name of the eleventh person, (Antonio) Oñate (secretary of the CP FIJL, member of the Madrid Local Federation and stand-in for Mariano García Cascales at the Defence Junta's Intelligence & Liaison department). So nowhere do we find the name of Amor Nuño, as Martínez Reverte alleges, but we do find the names of all the participants mentioned. But there is more. On p 580 of the minutes transcribed by Martínez Reverte it is stated: "At this point the CN authorised the entry of [illegible] some not very pleasant news to those assembled." And do we know the name of this new arrival? Absolutely, for his name appears on p. 581, the last page of the minutes: (Pedro) Falomir. And we can even establish what each of them was representing without undue difficulty, if we read libertarian movement texts from the time. Cardona was representing the CN, Serafín Aliaga was serving on the CN (as head of its propaganda bureau), Oñate was secretary of the CP FIJL, García Pradas was managing editor of the newspaper *CNT*, Val was the secretary of the CRD, Diezhandino was there as secretary of the FNIF, Luque had joined Horacio Prieto's National Committee and was now secretary of the CND. [True, in his transcription of the minutes, Martínez Reverte is indiscreet enough to add (sic) right after Diezhandino's name as if to suggest that the name is a mistake and suggesting at the same

time that the recording secretary was incapable of writing his own name. An unforgivable act of sloppiness in a historian!]. That leaves just two: Fernando Trigo and Enrique García Pérez. Eduardo de Guzmán, in his book *El año de la Victoria* (p. 96) says of the former that he was a veteran libertarian militant from the Healthworkers' Union, a first-aidier by profession and that he headed a Red Cross unit on the front throughout the war. In his *Esbozo de una enciclopedia histórica del anarquismo español*, Miguel Iñíguez tells us that Trigo was a member of the 'Los Libertos' anarchist group to which Melchor Rodríguez, Feliciano Benito and Celedonio Pérez, among others, also belonged. It is questionable that, given his profession and his membership of the same anarchist group as Melchor Rodríguez, would have been in favour of 'sacas' and summary executions. As for Enrique García, the records of the Defence Junta show that he stood in for Amor Nuño in November 1936 and this is confirmed by Miguel Iñíguez (op.cit.). So plainly, it was Enrique García Pérez that was representing the Madrid Local Federation at this meeting of the National Committee, at which the Local Federation was being called upon to give a briefing on the Defence Junta meeting. And Amor Nuño was not present. But the minutes contain even more details confirming that Enrique García was there representing the Local Federation, in that said representative was the one that reported on how the Production (War Industries) department would be operating (see p. 579) and did it in such detail as only someone conversant with that department could have done. The Local Federation was not there to speak for the Intelligence and Liaison department because, in the distribution of posts, that had been awarded to the Libertarian Youth and the meeting was attended by the Peninsular Committee secretary Antonio Oñate who was also standing in for Mariano García Cascales, a member of Madrid's Libertarian Youth and the official head of the department. As a result, the National Committee meeting was attended by two stand-ins from the Defence Junta departments, but not by the official department heads. It ought to be emphasised here that Martínez Reverte has not looked at Eduardo de Guzmán's or Miguel Iñíguez's books.

But there is more besides. The minutes allude to the meeting's having begun the previous day (7 November) since: "The FNIF National Committee asked that this matter be held over until later and that they should now discuss the item that was left over from yesterday; to wit, coordination of Madrid's local Defence Junta." And there are also references to the meeting's having run over into a third session at 6.00 p.m. on 8 November. Meaning that the meeting stretched over three sittings and that the CNT had not, at the first sitting on the afternoon of 7 November, agreed anything with the Unified Socialist Youth, since the matter of the coordination of the departments of the Defence Junta had not been dealt with. The minutes of that first sitting and especially the minutes from the third sitting are crucial, since it was at the latter that the resolutions passed at the meeting would be spelled out. It is a pity that we do not know what these were, just as it is a pity that Martínez Reverte has not given any clue as to the location of the minutes transcribed by him. And the short extract in which Val is mentioned is important too; it reads "Comrade Val reported that the enemy had broken through the Pozuelo cordon and a comrade was assigned to go to the War [Department] to convey the news and see if a defence might be organised." The comrade who set off was none other than Val himself and this we know from Cipriano Mera's memoirs *Guerra, exilio y cárcel de un anarcosindicalista* where he tells us, "We reached Madrid at about six o'clock in the morning of the 8th... Straight away Major Palacios made for the Centre Regional's Defence committee, whilst Verardini and I headed for the War Ministry to formally report our presence in Madrid. We were greatly taken aback to find that there was no one there to receive us. What was going on? The offices were empty and in a shambles. The impression was that everybody had left in a hurry and on the run. In the end we did find a porter or orderly whom we asked where the High

Command was...He eventually told us that he had heard that General Miaja was in the basement of the Ministry of Finance.

“So, wasting no time, off we went to the Finance Ministry. In we went for the very first time at around eleven o'clock in the morning. They pointed out to us and we walked into the office of General Miaja, whom I was also seeing for the very first time. With him was Major Rojo and also present were our commanding officer Palacios and comrade Val. The latter introduced us and Miaja, plainly startled, turned to me and asked:

“So you are Mera, eh?”

“Yes, sir; at your service if there is anything useful I can do for you.” (Mera, p. 78).

Such precise and detailed information from Mera is very significant as it confirms that Eduardo Val was also not present at the meeting at which the agreement with the JSU was thrashed out and so was unaware of the existence of that meeting. Nor had he any reason to agree to the terms of it. Again it is powerfully underlined that Martínez Reverte has not looked at the memoirs of Cipriano Mera when Mera was one of the architects of the defence of Madrid and of the war effort in the Centre region.

So far we have been able to show that neither Amor Nuño, secretary of the Local Federation, nor Eduardo Val, secretary of the regional defence committee was at the National Committee meeting at which a briefing was given on the agreement reached at the Defence Junta with members of the Unified Socialist Youth. According to Martínez Reverte, Amor Nuño and Eduardo Val were the chief controllers of the CNT's checkpoint militias in Madrid and across the centre region. Obviously Eduardo Val could not have taken part in the meeting with the JSU members since he was not on the Defence Junta. But was Amor Nuño a participant in the meeting? We know that Santiago Carrillo has always denied any part in the Paracuellos killings and indeed has stated that as soon as the Defence Junta meeting finished he left for a meeting with the diplomat Felix Schlayer, one of the diplomats who had uncovered the murders being carried out in Madrid. Felix Schlayer confirms this in his memoirs – which Martínez Reverte also omits to mention – so it is hard to charge Carrillo with having been present at the meeting with the anarchists. However, maybe Amor Nuño met up with other members of the JSU after the Defence Junta meeting. But Amor Nuño, just like Carrillo, went to a different location right after the meeting and we have a witness to confirm this. No less a witness than Gregorio Gallego, the source that Martínez Reverte used to obtain information about Amor Nuño. On pages 229 and 230 of his book, Gallego writes: “ I found out about the line-up of the new Defence Junta formed under the chairmanship of General Miaja from Amor Nuño, who was kind enough to drop over to Campamento one night of furious gunfire to ask me to work with him at the War Industries department which had been assigned to him, I should say by rights, in that most of the metalworking industry was under CNT control. Amor Nuño had been pulled out of the front lines by unanimous decision of the Local Federation, of which he was the secretary. From a federalist viewpoint, the theory could not have been more proper; if the central government was deserting the capital, its administration had to devolve upon the local agencies. Amor Nuño fitted the bill just then, for with his ostentatious ways and squirrel-like energy, he knew how to bring gravitas to positions. His great failing was always organisation, which he was forever leaving to somebody else; that and a tendency towards narcissism.” So on a night of heavy shelling which is confirmed by other sources, Amor Nuño had gone out to the Campamento after the Defence Junta meeting and he had gone there to seek Gregorio Gallego's assistance. Like Carrillo, he could not have been in two places at the same time: at a secret meeting and at another meeting several kilometres away with Gallego. Remember that the Defence Junta

meeting had begun at 6.00 p.m., by which hour darkness was already closing in in November in Madrid. We know from Carrillo's meeting with Schlayer that the Defence Junta meeting was due to finish sometime before 8.00 p.m., did end at nine o'clock, so, allowing for travel time, Nuño and Gallego must have met up at about 9.00 p.m. So the last remaining argument Martínez Reverte might have for pointing the finger at Amor Nuño bites the dust as well.

And Gregorio Gallego offers further particularly useful details allowing us to understand the replacement of the libertarian representatives on the very first Madrid Defence Junta details which, on more than one score contradict Martínez Reverte/s opinions. "I was more surprised to learn that the Libertarian Youth had been assigned the Intelligence and Liaison department and that the incumbent was Mariano García Cascales, Secretary of the youth organisation in Madrid. Cascales was a shy and introverted lad of pretty much the same age as myself, dull rather than brilliant and more effective in clandestine activity than in public activity. To counter Cascales' introversion they had appointed as his stand-in none other than the secretary of the FIJL Peninsular Committee, Antonio Oñate, a nonsense that can only be found in libertarian circles. Later I found out that the appointment of Oñate as deputy was made on discovering that Santiago Carrillo, the JSU general secretary, had taken over the Public Order department. Not that Oñate was any better than Cascales, but, like Amor Nuño, he knew how to bring a degree of brilliance and ingenious effervescence to positions. Antonio Oñate hailed from Seville and his partner was Lola Navarrete one of the most active and bravest girls in our district youth circle." On page 263 Gallego clarifies that "The Defence Junta running the capital had shown itself to be an insidious agency capable of triggering irksome situations due to the hegemony enjoyed by the communists. Amor Nuño and Mariano García Cascales were approachable and willing to see to complaints from militants and trade union committees about the excesses and abuse of power coming from some of the Junta's councillors." And, finally, on pp. 271 and 272, Gallego states that: "With the reshuffling of the Junta, the Libertarian Youth were assigned the War Industries department and the CNT the Transport and Communications department. Meeting in assembly, the younger libertarians agreed to replace their representative and appointed Lorenzo Iñigo. The replacement of Mariano García Cascales by Lorenzo Iñigo was justified in terms of the need to have at the War Industries department a professional metalworker enjoying some sway over the workers, but it went deeper than that. García Cascales had proved rather weak in confrontations with the communists. Antonio Oñate's dalliance with Santiago Carrillo was another factor. Young libertarians suspected that the trip made by the top leaders of the JSU and FIJL to Albacete and Valencia in order to fetch a few crates of ammunition had more to do with Santiago Carrillo's publicity-seeking by way of defending himself against allegations levelled against him than the real need to save Madrid, as the communist press had been preaching, leading to the trip by both youth secretaries' being afforded extraordinary prominence."

And now on to the known facts:

1. We know that the Defence Junta department chiefs met at 11.00 a.m. on 7 November, in the absence of libertarian representatives, and carved up the departments.
2. At 5.30 p.m., that afternoon, consul Felix Schlayer met with Miaja, setting out the issue of the prisoners at the Modelo prison and receiving reassurances as to the safety of the prisoners. Once the meeting with Miaja ended, at around 6.00 p.m., Schlayer saw the new Defence Junta assembling. He describes the entry of all the representatives: "Actually, shortly after that the door opened, whereupon in poured a range of the representatives of those currently in government, faithfully mirroring the ranks of the people from whom they are drawn: there was the rather

bourgeoisified type, smug in his superiority, anything but martial in his anti-militarism, the left republicans; then there were the hermetic but proud looking men from the socialist-communist youth and, lastly, the typical representatives of Madrid's "wide boys", the anarchists of the FAI who strode in preening themselves in their self-importance, majestic, all of them in brown lather jackets with huge pistols in their waistbands."

3. We know from the record of the establishment of the Defence Junta that the meeting kicked off at 6.00 p.m. Thereby coinciding with the time mentioned in the minutes as well as the time mentioned by Schlayer. The CNT was assigned the Production department and the Libertarian Youth the Intelligence and Liaison department.

4. We know from Felix Schlayer's book that he had an appointment scheduled with Carrillo at 7.00 p.m., having seen him earlier at 6.00 p.m. and that after a lengthy talk which was also attended by the Red Cross representative, he headed for home at 9.00 p.m.

5. We know that Amor Nuño, on the night of 7 November, visited Gregorio Gallego to tell him of his appointment and to seek his cooperation, in that Gallego had served on an earlier Madrid Junta. There was intensive artillery fire that night. Both of these things are set out by Gregorio Gallego in his book *Madrid, Corazón que se desangra*.

6. Consequently, after the meeting at which the Junta was constituted, there was no meeting between CNT and Libertarian Youth representatives and representatives from the JSU.

7. We know that the 'sacas' started on 6 November 1936 and that on 7 November they began in the wee small hours of the morning, carried on through the afternoon and by daybreak on 8 November most of the killings had already been carried out.,

8. We know from the press on 8 November that following the foundation meeting of the Junta, a second meeting was held which concluded at 2.30 a.m. Aróstegui and Martínez (1984, p. 80) indicate that "analysis of newspaper coverage makes it clear that the meeting was in two parts, at the end of each part of which a brief communiqué was issued which the newspapers, separately, picked up. Furthermore there is every indication that no official minutes were taken of the second part of that meeting, in that the resolutions that we know were passed are not recorded in them .. The press on 8 November reported 'a meeting of the Madrid Defence Junta that ended at 2.30 a.m.' or referred to 'the Madrid Defence Junta held its fist meeting. The meeting concluded at 2.30 a.m.' or 'Overnight the Madrid Defence Junta assembled and was established. When the meeting concluded at 2.30 a.m. the following note was issued...The note in question read, word for word: "It was decided at the meeting of the Madrid Defence Junta that important measures be taken relating to War, Public Order and Production. It was likewise agreed that an Official Bulletin be published setting out what were regarded as the necessary provisions. That Bulletin is to start publication from tomorrow, Monday. The Junta means to galvanise every resource so that the defence of Madrid by all of its inhabitants is effective, and fascism prevented from taking over the Republic's capital."

As we say, no such resolutions are recorded in any minutes, but we know about them because they were published in the *Bulletin*. Likewise the decision to embark upon publication that Monday, 9 November, came to nothing since the launch edition did not appear until Friday 13 November. Moreover, during the interval between the constitution [of the Junta] and the emergence of the names of the council members, a further change was introduced: the Production department came to be renamed the War Industries department, a title much more in tune with its real function."

Meaning that we know from press reports that matters relating to War, Public Order and Intelligence (the launch of a *Bulletin*) were dealt with.

9. We know that the minutes for 8 November show that Amor Nuño ‘took exception to the absence of some council members’. From the list of those who spoke, it can be deduced that those absent from the second Defence Junta meeting were the communists and the Unified Socialist Youth members i.e., Mitje, Dieguez, Carrillo and Cazorla, whereas the representatives from the CNT, the Libertarian Youth, Unión Republicana, the PSOE, the Casa del Pueblo and the Syndicalist Party were in attendance. Which is scarcely suggestive of important arrangements having been agreed between them just a few short hours earlier.

10. It is in the light of all of this (the record of the launch of the Junta, the press report and Amor Nuño's objection, all of which occurred over a 24 hour period) that the minutes unearthed by Martínez Reverte should be read, insofar as it relates to the Madrid Local Federation. On this score, the minutes state, word for word:

“The FNIF National Committee asked that the matter be held over until later and that discussion turn to the same point outstanding from yesterday; to wit, the coordination of the Madrid Defence Junta ...

“Reading first from the communiqué addressed by the government to General Miaja establishing the constitution of the Madrid Defence Junta under his chairmanship and with input from the left-wing trade union and political organisations, the Local Federation resumed its report. In that document the eventuality of retreat as far as Cuenca had been anticipated. The Junta’s establishment was reported on and the earlier point about the interest shown by the embassies in political prisoners and refugees reiterated, reference being made to the fact that yesterday there had been a move to storm the Chilean Embassy after comrades established for sure that there were huge numbers of fascists sheltering there; that move had had to be cut short. Next a report was made on the agreements entered into with the socialists manning the Public Order Department as to what was to be done with the prisoners, it having been agreed that they should be split up into three groups, namely:

“Category one: Fascists and dangerous persons. Immediate execution, responsibility covered

“Category Two: Detainees posing no danger, to be transferred immediately to Chinchilla prison. With every assurance.

“Category Three: Detainees with no case to answer, to be set free immediately with every sort of assurance and used to parade our humanitarianism before the Embassies.

“Next there was a briefing on how the Production department should operate. Reporting on the meeting held with the munitions commission and the manner in which that functions...

“Yesterday’s briefing from [the] War [department]: Upbeat as regards the Madrid South sector. Heroic resistance being offered. The enemy hell bent on cutting off Madrid’s water supply, for which reason he is racing for the Sierra. Yesterday a tank carrying the commanding officer of the Tank Brigade and all their operational plans for their entry into Madrid had been captured.

“A massive counter-offensive were to be launched with the deployment of sixteen thousand men. The troops were continually being relieved so as to keep them fresh and regular food supplies were being looked at. The air force was to drop Madrid Defence Junta leaflets to put paid to the drop in morale possibly triggered by the government’s departure from Madrid. The work of the Production Department was geared solely and exclusively towards boosting production for delivery to [the] War [Department] for distribution. For their information, he added that they had so far turned out a million five hundred thousand cartridges and 2,500 rifles.

“Comrade Oñate from the Peninsular Committee then spoke on the subject of the Intelligence & Liaison Department, pointing out what the Marxists wanted ; hence their proposal for privately owned newspapers and radio stations to be taken in hand and going so far as to cancel

all current gun permits, as well as making couriers (motorcyclists) answerable to [the] War [Department]. This suggestion had been opposed since all of this, together with the counter-espionage network, should properly come under the remit of the Intelligence & Liaison Department. It had been agreed in principle that the Madrid Local Defence Junta should publish an official bulletin.

“He added that he might propose that the propaganda department be cleared out and allotted to the FAI. In his opinion the entire ‘gilded’ bureaucracy need doing away with, as did that department’s responsibility for vehicles and gasoline.

“The National Committee indicated its support for the incorporation of the FAI and also for our Organisation’s duty to insist that it have a hand in the departments of ...”

If we compare the Defence Junta’s press release and the minutes of the CNT meeting, we can see that what the Local Federation representative was doing was quite simply delivering a full briefing on the overall sitting of the Junta between 6.00 p.m. on 7 November through to 2.30 a.m. on 8 November, just as the FNIF had requested the Local Federation to do. Taken together with the press release, the minutes of the full Junta meeting list Miaja’s report, Public Order, War and Production business and the launch of the Bulletin as the matters dealt with. For his part the rapporteur opened with a briefing on the government’s message to Miaja (at its foundation meeting) and the orders issued to him, moving on to the Public Order, Production and War department business, finishing with Intelligence and with the proposal that they press for the admission of the FAI, something that was to be done only a few hours later that very afternoon at the Defence Junta’s second session. Read the minutes impartially and objectively and one cannot help but conclude anything other than that the CNT and Libertarian Youth members were reporting on what had passed at the Defence Junta’s first session. There were no private arrangements between organisations. And no hush-hush, independent meetings, other than what had been dealt with over the two sittings of the Defence Junta’s very first get-together. Let us look at a few points which support this interpretation:

1. The Local Federation reported that a raid on the Chilean Embassy had been thwarted and raised the matter as something related to the Defence Junta.

2. When reference was made to the third category of prisoners (“with no case to answer”) it was determined that they should be freed immediately and with every assurance, “and used to parade our humanitarianism before the Embassies”. Plainly, the intention was to demonstrate the humanitarianism, not of the CNT but of the JUNTA, because the detainees were not being held by the CNT or by the JSU, but by the Republican government and the Junta; when the second category was mentioned (“transferred immediately to Chinchilla prison. With every assurance.”) and mention is made of a transfer with every assurance, it is also obvious that, as far as that second group of prisoners was concerned, they were not about to be evacuated by folk with no responsibility for the prisons, which is to say, the CNT was not about to carry out the relocation. But we also know from the 11 November minute of the Defence Junta that both Caminero (Syndicalist Party) and Enrique García (CNT Local Federation) asked Carrillo about moving the prisoners and the comment was made that they were asking him about something that had been agreed previously by the Junta. Caminero asked if the prisoner evacuation had already taken place (as had supposedly been agreed at the Junta meeting on 7 November), to which Carrillo replied that it had not, which prompted the CNT's representative to urge that the transfer should be mounted with increased external security (meaning with protection for the prisoners. Trying to make sure and not allowing anything to befall them en route) and Carrillo mentioned the

diplomatic corps's worries as a reason for the evacuation's having been postponed. Actually, what the minute states is the following:

“CAMINERO asked CARRILLO if the Modelo Prison had been evacuated, a matter which he regarded as being of the utmost urgency.

“CARRILLO replied in detail, stating that every measure was in place, although as yet the evacuation had not gone ahead for certain reasons which he spelled out.

“DIEGUEZ made certain statements and suggested that the evacuation should carry on, the numbers of prisoners involved posing a serious problem.

“CARRILLO reiterated his earlier arguments, citing the attitude adopted by the Diplomatic Corps and crediting the suspension of the evacuation to this.

“ENRIQUE GARCÍA suggested that the prisoners be transferred from the Modelo prison with increased external security.

“A vote of confidence was passed in comrade CARRILLO's ability to resolve this matter.

“DIEGUEZ asked that irregularities such as the vigilance exercised by unauthorised persons insisting on oversight other than the Junta's oversight be brought to an end. He was specifically referring to the CNT.

“CAMINERO asked whether guards had been posted on the streets and highways yet.

“CARRILLO replied that the matter, whilst not yet totally resolved, was close to that point, the situation having changed greatly in this regard. Militians had been replaced by Agents of the authorities. He announced that he was ready to act with the utmost vigour to end abuses and arbitrary actions.”

3. Following the briefing on the prisoners, the Local Federation reported on how the Production Department would have to function, that being the description used at that point for the War Industries Department.

4. The briefing then moved on to the war. Such a minutely detailed War briefing, including the dispositions taken, could only have emanated from the Defence Junta since the CNT's remit did not extend to many of the details proffered; reference was made to aircraft dropping Junta leaflets so as to forestall loss of morale at the government's departure and to the division of labour between the Production (War Industries) Department and [the] War [Department].

5. Carrying on with the briefing about the Defence Junta meeting, Oñate, the head of the Intelligence & Liaison Department, reported on the launch of the information bulletin and squabbles with the 'Marxists'.

6. The attempt at demarcation between the remits of the War Department and the Production Department and the attempt to bring information and counter-espionage under control highlighted the differences of opinion between the libertarians and the JSU and PCE, right from the very first meeting.

7. The matter of FAI entry into the Junta was broached and proposal was made that same afternoon, in accordance with the suggestions of the National Committee.

8. Given that the council members were there representing their organisations (the CNT and Libertarian Youth) they were not empowered to make decisions without prior consultation, the purpose of the briefing being to see what it was they should do and to avert any ill-advised moves. Ever since its foundation that was the normal modus operandi of CNT delegates on any organisation, committee or Junta. There are examples aplenty in the minutes of this having been standard practice on the part of members of the CNT and Libertarian Youth on the Defence Junta, dating right back to its very first session. And the minutes of the Junta also show communists complaining about this modus operandi on the part of CNT representatives, whom they accused

of never making decisions for themselves in their capacity as Junta members, without first running them past their organisation. Thus, in the minutes of the 18 November sitting of the Defence Junta, the following scolding was directed at the CNT's representatives: "Each and every one of us is here representing his organisation, so the theory that once resolutions have been passed on the Junta the propriety or otherwise of abiding by them has to be put separately to the organisations cannot be countenanced, for those resolutions need to be implemented and embraced by all organisations. What happens is that most of us are undeniably influenced by our habit of serving on committees where, as we all know, every resolution reached had to be laid before the organisations. But here we stand for rather more."

9. The CNT response to the prisoners' issue was the one put forward by Melchor Rodríguez as Director-General of Prisons (the final item in the minutes).

10. Finally, we come to the construction to be placed on the phrase "responsibility covered". Martínez Reverte places on this a negative interpretation meaning covering-up, concealing or hiding responsibility. But that is only one interpretation. It might also be construed in the opposite sense, that is, as taking responsibility. That positive sense would be associated with the fact that neither the libertarians nor the remaining members of the Defence Junta - with the possible exceptions of the communists and the members of the JSU - were aware of the 'sacas' on 6, 7 and 8 November and Melchor Rodríguez's response to them did not come until 11 November, by which time he was ensconced as unappointed Director-General of Prisons. Meaning that it might be thought that the members of the Public Order Department were somehow trying to implicate the remaining members of the Defence Junta in deeds which had already been carried out. Such a positive construction would fit better with other known facts, such as, say, the fact that Melchor Rodríguez expressed no outrage during the CNT Committee meeting (judging from the minutes of that meeting) and that, within a few days, he was to try to prevent the 'sacas' (but not the execution of condemned men, even though he was against the death penalty as a matter of ideological principle).

Conclusions

To conclude, then: the minutes that Martínez Reverte has turned up regarding the CNT national committee's meeting with members of its Madrid Local Federation and of the Centre regional, contains valuable historical information about the contents of the matters dealt with at the second sitting of the Madrid Defence Junta's meeting of 7 November, which ended at 2.30 a.m. on 8 November. As Aróstegui and Martínez were pointing out in 1984 (p. 80), "As we say there is no record of any such agreements in any minutes, but we know about them because they were published in the Bulletin." Now, thanks to the CNT's own archives, rather more is known about those agreements, and albeit that significant complementary information such as, say, relates to how the Junta meant to carry out the executions of fascist prisoners and dangerous prisoners, it was already known that mass executions had taken place (we can only assume that most organisations did not know this, although the JSU and Miaja did know, having been told by Felix Schlayer), or if the selection of the prisoners was left up to the Public Order Department.

In any case, it has been demonstrated that, contrary to what Martínez Reverte argues, the CNT was not involved actively or passively in such executions, that Amor Nuño held no secret meeting with the JSU delegates, that Amor Nuño was never expelled from the libertarian movement, that he was, rather, regarded as one of the most important members in the Centre region right up until the end of the war, that Amor Nuño moved to halt looting, murders and to protect the clergy and that Amor Nuño was no coward who decamped leaving no trace, but was

murdered in the cells of the Interior Ministry in June 1939, at the age of twenty three.

It is startling that in arguing that such a meeting did take place, Martínez Reverte never interviewed the sole surviving member of that Defence Junta and alleged participant in the JSU-CNT meeting: Santiago Carrillo. From a journalistic viewpoint as well as from the viewpoint of the historian, that he should not have asked Carrillo whether such a meeting did take place and how he would interpret the information contained in the CNT National Committee minutes is simply unfathomable.

A final word: we believe that in his book, Martínez Reverte has failed to read and analyse important historical documentary evidence and has over-indulged himself in literary licence. Public rehabilitation by him of the figure of Amor Nuño would be especially advisable. But is it likely? Now that's a hard one to answer.

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