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The Spanish Resistance: The People Named

Albert Meltzer

1993

“El Quico” — whose name is Sabater in Spanish and Sabate in his native Catalan — was the prime Resistance fighter against the conquest of Franco after the civil war.

For years he was regarded as a criminal, even by respectable libertarians. Now, like others whose illegal activities were in the past, they may be viewed dispassionately. In October and November 1991 there was an exhibition in Barcelona called “Amnesia/Memoria” at the Centre d’Art Santa Monica de Barcelona, sponsored by the official Generalitat no less. (We are trying to get permission to show it in England but the exhibits have gone to New York).

It celebrated the many Resistance fighters (known in this country chiefly through Miguel Garcia, a participant in that resistance and after 20 years imprisonment, an indefatigable worker for anarchism here and abroad). Now a new generation of Catalan youth may learn about a previous generation, and one which was anarchist, not nationalist. This will be the subject of a future pamphlet in the KSL series with Virus Editorial of Barcelona (the first is now

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published under the title “The Unsung Struggle”) following that on Cerrada (not yet “rehabilitated” by the Generalitat!)

The KSL has been fortunate enough to get a video cassette of the film “Behold a Pale Horse”. Starring Gregory Peck as the “bandit”, Anthony Quinn as the head of the Guardia Civil and Omar Sharif as the priest, Anarchists will have missed it when it was shown as a film, with no A. mag then appearing to call attention to it. It is a portrayal of the Spanish resistance (though it only refers to Republicans and Nationalists and you could be forgiven for not realising it was a picture of the CNT struggle against fascism, if you didn’t know too much about Spain) The Gregory Peck character is based on (and at times vividly resembles Sabater) though he has grown old (which Sabater alas never did) and calls to mind Cerrada in his old age or many old fighters since. While Quinn is absolutely life-like as Quintinella (apart from the coincidence of names) there are not many worthy priests around like Omar Sharif’s outside Hollywood.

Can anyone locate the book by Emeric Pressburger? It would be a valuable addition to our library.