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Speech from the Bujaraloz Town Hall

Buenaventura Durruti

27 July 1936

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Durruti in the Spanish Revolution by Abel Paz.

Speech given to the Durruti Column in Bujaraloz, after several militiamen ran away from their comrades during an aerial attack. The speech was reconstructed by Abel Paz from testimonies given by Liberto Ros and Pablo Ruiz, who described it as “a lesson in revolutionary combat.” English translation by Chuck Morse.

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Friends, no one forced you to join the Column. You chose your fate freely and the fate of the first CNT-FAI Column is quite thankless indeed. García Oliver said it over the radio in Barcelona: we’re going to take Zaragoza or die in the attempt. And I’m saying the same thing today: we’ll give our lives before retreating. Zaragoza is in fascist hands and there are hundreds, thousands of workers under the threat of their rifles. Didn’t we leave Barcelona to liberate them?! They’re waiting for us and yet we ran in the face of the first enemy attack. That’s a beautiful way to show the world and our comrades the courage of the anarchists; filled with fear by three airplanes!

The bourgeoisie won’t let us create a libertarian communist society just because we want to. They’ll fight back and defend their privileges. The only way we can establish libertarian communism is by destroying the bourgeoisie. Our ideal has a clear path, but we must follow it with resolve. The peasants that we’ve left behind, and who have begun to put our theories into practice, see our rifles as a guarantee of their harvest. Letting the enemy pass would mean that all their initiatives are in vain.

And, even worse, the victors will make them pay for their audacity with death. We must defend them. It's a thankless struggle, unlike any we have fought thus far. What happened today is only a warning. Now the battle will really begin. They will bathe us in shrapnel and we will have to respond with hand grenades and even knives. The enemy will strike out like a cornered beast. And it will strike hard. But we haven't gotten to that point yet; now it struggles not to fall under the weight of our arms. It also has support from Germany and Italy, and we have nothing more than faith in our ideal. But all the enemies' teeth have broken upon that faith. Now the fascists will break theirs as well.

We count our victory in Barcelona in our favor and must rapidly use it to our advantage. If not, the enemy will grow stronger than us and subject us to its merciless rage.

Our victory depends on how quickly we act. The sooner we attack, the greater our chances of success. Right now, victory is on our side, but we have to consolidate it by taking Zaragoza at once. What happened today cannot happen again. There are no cowards in the ranks of the CNT and FAI. We don't want people among us who tremble at the first signs of combat.

To those who ran today and stopped the column from advancing, I ask you to have the courage to drop your rifle, so that another, firmer hand can pick it up. Those of us who remain will continue our march. We will conquer Zaragoza, we will free the workers of Pamplona, and we will join our Asturian miner comrades. We will win and give our country a new world. To those who return, I ask you not to tell anyone about what happened today, because it fills us with shame.