

governor was arrested and the rebel officers he had locked up were freed. Generals Saliquet and Ponte entered the headquarters pistols in hand to take command of the rising. General Nicolás Molero and those loyal to him fought back and in the exchange of fire, three men were killed and five wounded, including Molero himself, who was executed several days later. Saliquet proclaimed a state of war and ordered the troops into the street. The railwaymen of the UGT fought with great bravery, but were soon annihilated. The 478 people who had sought refuge in the *casa del pueblo* were imprisoned.<sup>25</sup>

The failure of the left to secure Saragossa, the capital of Aragón, was a major disaster, especially for the anarchists. The government, suspicious of General Cabanellas's intentions, sent a friend of his, General Nuñez de Prado, to confirm his loyalty to the Republic. Cabanellas declared for the rising and had Nuñez de Prado and his ADC shot. There were about 30,000 CNT members in Saragossa, but their leaders insisted on working through the civil governor, even though he gave them no arms. Troops led by Colonel Monasterio marched into the streets at dawn on 19 July and the virtually defenceless workers suffered a fearful massacre.

Barcelona presented a very different story, even though it had been regarded by the military conspirators as the most certain conquest of all. The nationalists, relying on UME officers who were right-wing and anti-Catalan, had 12,000 troops to bring in from their barracks to dominate the central area. General Goded was to fly in from Majorca, once the island was secured, and take command. The plotters, however, never took into account the determination of the workers' organizations, nor did they foresee that the Assault Guard and, more surprisingly, the Civil Guard, would oppose them.

On the evening of 18 July Companys, the president of the Catalan Generalitat, refused to issue arms to the CNT, even though news of events in Morocco and Seville had reached him and he had been given documentary proof of plans for the rising in Barcelona. Catalan police arrested anarchists carrying arms, but they were released after vigorous protests by the CNT regional committee.

The anarchists, who knew very well what awaited them if the army seized the city, decided not to leave their fate in the hands of politicians. During that night the CNT local defence committees

went ahead with full preparations for war. Isolated armouries were seized (a couple with the active assistance of sympathetic NCOs) and weapons were taken from four ships in the harbour. Even the rusting hulk of the prison ship *Uruguay* was stormed, so as to take the warders' weapons. The UGT dockers' union knew of a shipment of dynamite in the port, and once that was seized, home-made grenades were manufactured all through the night. Every gun shop in the city was stripped bare. Cars and lorries were requisitioned and metal workers fixed crude armour plating while sandbags were piled behind truck cabs. Vehicles were given clear identification with large white letters daubed on the roof and sides. The vast majority were the anarchist initials CNT-FAI, but POUM and PSUC were also in evidence. Some bore the letters UHP (United Proletarian Brothers), the joint cry of the workers' alliance in the Asturian revolt.

The atmosphere of that hot night was highly charged. The Popular Olympiad (organized as a boycott of the Olympics in Nazi Germany) was due to open the next morning. The event was forgotten in the threatening crisis, and the foreign athletes waited uneasily in their hotels and dormitories. (Many of them joined the fighting the next day alongside the workers and around 200 later joined militia columns.) Companys, realizing he was superfluous for the moment, went for a walk on the Ramblas, a felt hat pulled down over his eyes to avoid being recognized. The streets were crowded and noisy, with loudspeakers attached to the trees playing music interrupted by announcements. In the favourite anarchist meeting place, the Café La Tranquilidad, CNT members were dashing in and out to hear the latest news and report on the arming of the workers. The members of the regional committee, such as Buenaventura Durruti, Juan García Oliver and Diego Abad de Santillán, maintained a close liaison with the Generalitat despite Companys's decision. In fact a few assault guards ignored the Generalitat's instructions and handed out rifles to the CNT from their own armoury.

Just before dawn on 19 July, the soldiers in the Pedralbes barracks were given rum rations by their officers, then told that orders had been received from Madrid to crush an anarchist rising. Falangists and other supporters wearing odd bits of uniform joined the column as it set off up the Diagonal, one of the major thoroughfares of Barcelona.<sup>26</sup> Almost immediately factory sirens all

over the city sounded the alarm. Also at about five in the morning, the Montesa cavalry regiment moved out of its barracks in the Calle Tarragona, the Santiago regiment of dragoons left the Travessera de Gràcia barracks and a battery of the 7th Light Artillery Regiment marched forth from the Sant Andreu barracks, where more than 30,000 rifles were held.

The deployment of troops into the streets was badly co-ordinated. The infantry regiment from the Parque barracks was vigorously attacked and forced to make a fighting retreat back behind its own walls, while the Santiago cavalry regiment was scattered at the Cinc d'Oros. Some units never even broke out into the streets. Those that did manage to march out, advanced to seize strategic buildings near the Plaza de España and the Plaza de Cataluña. They barricaded themselves in the Hotel Colón, the Ritz and the central telephone exchange. Detachments attacked en route made barricades to defend themselves, but these were charged by heavy lorries driven in suicidal assaults. The soldiers were also attacked with home-made bombs lobbed from rooftops and by snipers. Barricades to bar their way to the centre were constructed by almost everyone who could not take part in the fighting. Those made with paving stones could withstand light artillery if properly laid, as the workers knew from the street fighting during the *Semana Trágica* in 1909.

At about 11 a.m. General Goded arrived from Majorca by seaplane. The island had been easily secured for the rising, although Minorca, with its submarine base at Port Mahon, was won for the left by soldiers and NCOs who resisted their officers. Goded went immediately to the *capitanía* (the captain-general's headquarters), where he arrested the loyal divisional commander, Llano de la Encomienda. It was not long, however, before all the rebel-held buildings in the centre of the city were besieged. The black and red diagonal flag of the CNT-FAI appeared on barricades, lorries and public buildings. Loudspeakers in the streets continued to relay news, instructions and exhortations throughout the long hot Sunday. Churches were set on fire after reports of sniping from church towers (not by priests, as rumour said, but by soldiers who had occupied the belfries of Los Carmelitas and Santa Madrona). Summary executions were carried out, including a dozen priests in the Carmelite convent wrongly accused of firing at people from its windows.

Attacks across open ground surrounding the besieged buildings caused heavy casualties. Then, at about two o'clock, when it was evident that the army would not be able to defeat such determined numbers, Colonel Escobar brought in his civil guards on the side of the workers, with a column of 800 mounting the Vía Layetana to the Commission of Public Order where Companys waited on the balcony. A mounted squadron trotting along the Ramblas gave the clenched fist salute to roars of approval from the crowds. It was the first time that this paramilitary force had been cheered by the workers of Barcelona, though their instinctive suspicion of the Civil Guard did not disappear. With their excellent marksmanship, the civil guards were to prove a great help in the attack on the Hotel Colón and the Ritz, although the anarchists recaptured the telephone building on their own.

The real turning point came in the Avenida Icaria, where barricades were improvised with huge rolls of newsprint to stop cavalry and the 1st Mountain Artillery Regiment on their way to help the besieged rebels in the centre. At one moment during the fighting, a small group of workers and an assault guard rushed across to an insurgent artillery detachment with two 75mm guns. They held their rifles above their heads to show that they were not attacking as they rushed up to the astonished soldiers. Out of breath, they poured forth passionate arguments why the soldiers should not fire on their brothers, telling them that they had been tricked by their officers. The guns were turned round and brought to bear on the rebel forces. From then on more and more soldiers joined the workers and assault guards.

It was a salvo from captured artillery under the command of a docker which brought the surrender of General Goded in the *capitanía*. Many Republicans wanted to shoot this leading conspirator on the spot, but he was saved by a communist, Caridad Mercader, the mother of Trotsky's assassin. Goded was taken to Companys, who persuaded him to broadcast a statement over the radio to save further bloodshed. 'This is General Goded,' he said. 'I make this declaration to the Spanish people, that fate has been against me and I am a prisoner. I am saying this so that all those who are still fighting need feel no further obligation towards me.'<sup>27</sup> His words were of great help to the left-wing forces in other parts of Spain, especially in Madrid where they were broadcast over

loudspeakers to the rebels defending the Montaña barracks. But agreeing to make the statement did not save him. A court martial of republican officers in August condemned him to death for rebellion.

By nightfall only the Atarazanas barracks, near the port, and the Sant Andreu barracks still held out. The machine-gun emplacements round the Columbus monument had been silenced in the early evening. The airport at Prat was commanded by a sympathetic officer, Colonel Diaz Sandino, and his planes had attacked the monument, enabling a wave of workers and assault guards to overrun it. In the castle of Montjuich the garrison had shot the rebel officers and then handed over the weapons in the armoury to the CNT.

The next morning the anarchists, insisting that the capture of the Atarazanas barracks was their prerogative, told the paramilitary forces to stay clear. Buenaventura Durruti gave the order for the mass attack: '*¡Adelante hombres de la CNT!*' He led the charge with his companion in arms, Francisco Ascaso, who was killed almost immediately. That final action brought total casualty figures to about 600 killed and 4,000 wounded. As in all the fighting, a desperate, selfless bravery was shown by the attackers. Many of the casualties were unnecessary, especially those suffered in the final assault when the anarchists had artillery and air support available. Nevertheless, the courage of that attack passed into anarchist folklore, obscuring the fact that dash and bravery are dangerous substitutes for military science.

## 7

## The Struggle for Control

The plan for the military rising had given the navy a key role. Their ships were needed to bring the Army of Africa to the mainland. This had been worked out in advance between General Franco and senior naval officers, on fleet exercises near the Canaries. Warships were to make all speed for Spanish Morocco on the outbreak of the rising.

On 18 July General Queipo de Llano demonstrated his confidence in this strategy during the first of his garrulous broadcasts over Radio Sevilla, totally unconcerned that he might be revealing their plans in the process: 'The navy, always faithful to the heartbeat of the nation, has joined us en masse. Thanks to its help, the transport of troops from Morocco to the Peninsula has to be carried out very quickly and soon we will see arriving in Cádiz, Málaga and Algeciras the glorious columns of our Army of Africa, which will advance without rest on Granada, Córdoba, Jaén, Estremadura, Toledo and Madrid.'<sup>1</sup>

Such sweeping assumptions, however, proved premature. The overwhelming majority of officers in the navy certainly supported the rising. In common with the naval officers of most Latin countries, those in Spain were more aristocratic than their counterparts in the army. The Spanish army had acquired liberal pockets, having become a ladder for the social-climbing middle class in the nineteenth century. Spanish naval wardrooms, on the other hand, tended to be strongly monarchist and the average officer's attitude towards the lower deck at that time was scarcely enlightened.

On the morning of 18 July the ministry of marine in Madrid instructed three destroyers to sail for Melilla from Cartagena. They received orders by radio to bombard the insurgent town. The officers on board thus knew that the rising had begun. In two of the destroyers all hands were called on deck, where their captains explained the objectives of the rebellion. But if the officers had