



Woodcut by Helios Gomez

## Madrid's International Volunteers

*The famous body of troops has not only its colorful side, but a meaning for the future*

By James Hawthorne

**W**AR discipline, but not barrack discipline. Every member of the People's Army must be able, if he is the last man of his unit alive, to carry out alone the task assigned to his unit. Therefore he must understand perfectly the nature of the operation. Obedience to one's commanders. But faith in one's men! In a dictatorship, in a "democracy of a minority, barrack discipline is essential, for a thinking discipline will end in revolution. It is only in a democracy without quotation marks that confidence in the rank and file can supplement obedience to leaders. Only a People's Army can turn loose the initiative of every private. Therefore the men of a People's Army are beings distinct from those of a regular army, and its officers in no way resemble the stuffed shirts of staff headquarters or the natural brutes usually designated for top sergeant.

I. *The Man in Command*: General Alexei Kleber, Eleventh Brigade commander and top leader of the Northern Sector of the Madrid area, has a lifetime record of fighting in popular causes. Military technique at his command is blended with the experience of building armies in the trying circumstances of revolution and popular resistance to reactionary coups. Kleber is a Canadian citizen of mixed blood, with German, perhaps, predominant. He spent many years in the United States in New York, San Francisco, etc. In 1918 he took part in the defense of the Russian Revolution

against the interventionists. He makes no secret of the fact that he is an ardent worker for the Third International. He has devoted himself to military studies since 1914, and has written on both military and political themes, "because it is impossible to separate the one from the other." Improvised armies, the channelizing of the revolutionary forces of a people, are his lifework. The norms of regular armies are insufficient here (how well the German General Staff should know this).

General Kleber (not related to the Kleber of Napoleon's staff) has more than theoretic knowledge of revolutionary-military art. He participated in the German and Russian revolutions as well as the Chinese Civil Wars. His were responsible posts. "But don't say I won the Russian Revolution," he remarked to a correspondent, "because I didn't."

Smiling, pleasant, patient, he answers our questions with a witty turn if he feels that they are indiscreet, but carefully and precisely if they are important. Thus he explains why he came to Spain. "First, because Thaelmann said that we must fight fascism wherever it shows its head. And second, because if international fascism, trying to colonize a great nation such as Spain, is beaten here, we will avoid a new great war in Europe. Stalin has said, 'The peoples want peace.' Fascism, brutal expression of imperialism, wants war. We must crack the teeth of fascism, and Spain is the place where that must be done."

In talking to a military man during war

time, everyone finds that all the things he wants to know belong to the class of indiscreet questions. Still, we find a roundabout way of asking how long the war will last. He analyzed the factors at work. The situation, he felt, depended on nerves. Those of the enemy, after three weeks of defeat and disillusionment, are at the breaking point. The Moors no longer obey readily. At this moment the rebel front can be cracked by the impetus of July, by the stormy assault that took the La Montaña barracks—but this time on a wide scale on a dozen fronts. Loyalist morale has improved remarkably; the republican army has improved its technique, organization, and discipline, it is much better armed than it was. Subject always to the thousand hazards of war, a firm attack on all fronts could clear the situation in a month.

Kleber, with an unpretentious modesty, is anxious that we know he is not alone in the command. Dozens of proven fighters of the working class and of the cause of democracy are on his staff. Commandant Hans, like himself a military-political leader; Ludwig Renn, noted anti-fascist writer; two representatives of the real Germany. Mario Nicoletti, companion of Mussolini in 1912, prisoner of Mussolini in later years; and Luigi Gallo: two political commissars from Italy. Major Dumont and Colonel Vicente of France; the Mexican artillery marvel, Lt.-Col. Annibal Gabucio. Lukacs, Hungarian commander of the latest detachment to arrive. And Spain is



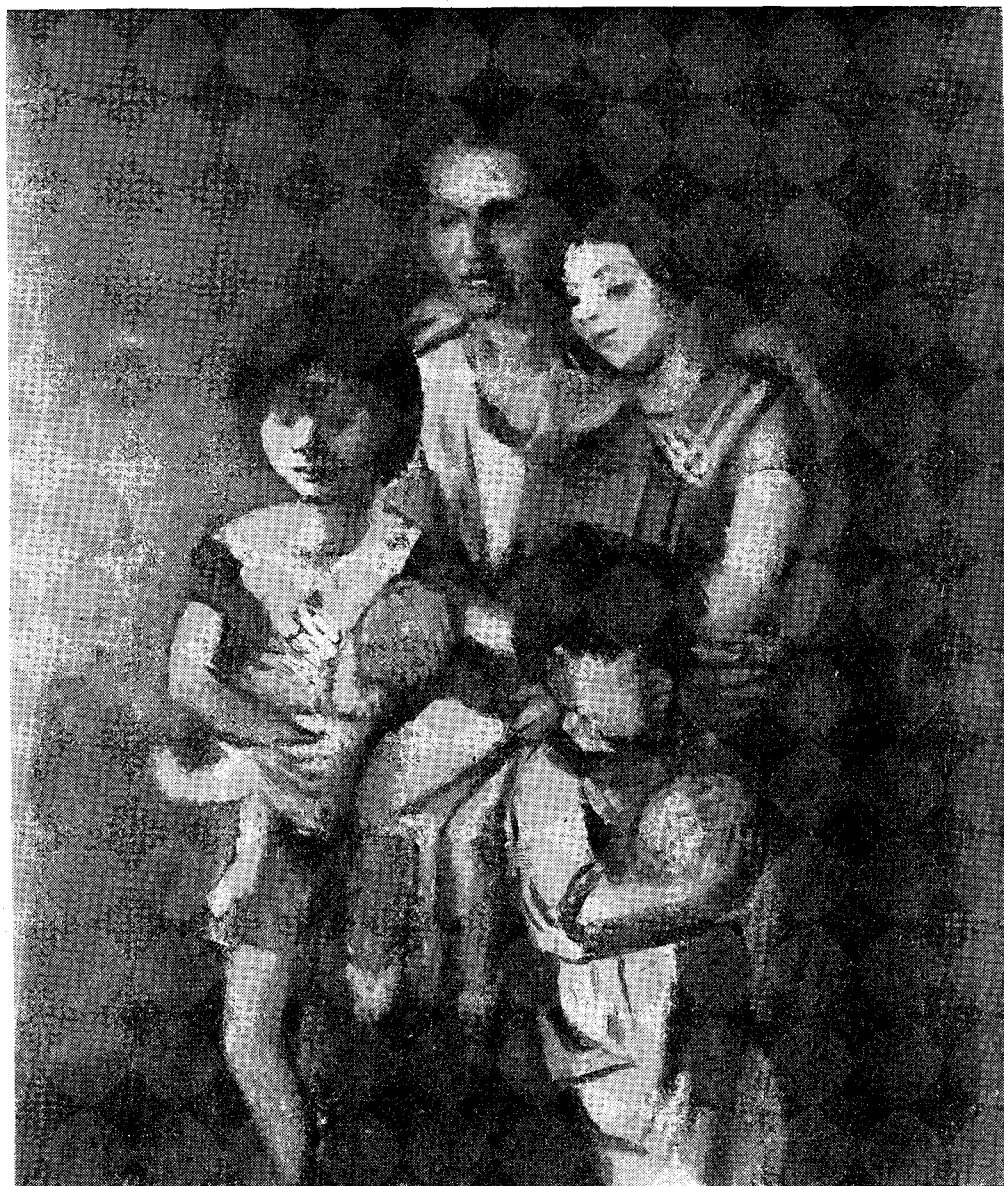
widely represented: the composer Durán is a commander here; Major Palacios with a highly disciplined C.N.T. trade-union column; Majors Enciso and Ortega with their battalion of the Presidential Guard; Major José María Galán, brother of the Galán who rose in Jaca in December, 1930, giving the premature signal for the April revolution. Tried in the street defense of democratic liberties, hardened in concentration camps, they have become the terror of the fascists.

II. *The Twelfth Brigade*: This is made up of three battalions named after Thaelmann, Garibaldi, and Marty. These are respectively German, Italian, and Franco-Belgian. The Thaelmann Battalion commands the awe even of the formidable International Brigadiers. Their losses have been heavy, because they have insisted on answering all calls for men who are ready to die. "No wonder Hitler is scared of the German Communists," an English member of the brigade remarked to me. In command of the Thaelmann Battalion is Ludwig Renn, author of the anti-imperialist books, *War* and *Post-War*, and long familiar with the concentration camps. Renn tells us that the battalion was formed of German anti-fascists resident in Spain, many of them already fighting in Aragon, when the idea was conceived of the International Brigades. The plan caught on quickly. Men who had fought in the streets of Hamburg against the Brown Shirts began to find their way to Barcelona. A battalion of Frenchmen, Yugoslavs, and Poles was formed in Albacete; another with two companies of Germans, one of Yugoslavs, and one of Poles.

Luigi Gallo is political commissar of the Twelfth Brigade. We find him busy editing their official organ. Wide-awake soldiers want to know what is going on in the world. A radio in the office picks up foreign and rebel stations. A news service often obtains items before they are published in Madrid. The paper, like the *Peuple en Armes* of the Eleventh Brigade, is read line for line in the advance posts. Captain Addy Mogg, who has taken over the political responsibility for the Thaelmann Battalion, drops in. He looks like a British clubman, and comes from the German upper bourgeoisie. He was a Prussian officer, but, like General Lukacs, had time to think and passed into the ranks of the Communists. He stops to talk for a moment with Hans Beimler,\* who escaped from a concentration camp at Munich. With him is an Austrian worker who escaped from a Swiss jail. Gustav Regler, author of *The Saar in Flames*, brings in an article. The stoutest fighters for world culture know their places in the ranks of the defenders of democracy, human decency, and intellectual freedom.

General Lukacs, as commander of the Twelfth Brigade, certainly deserves a detailed biography—if only there were not so many amazing men in the International Column!

\* Since this was written, Beimler was killed in action, leading his battalion in a charge.—THE EDITORS.



*Wife and Children of a Worker-Soldier*

Portrait by Moses Soyfer

Born in what is now Czechoslovakia, but was then the northern part of Hungary, he was a reserve officer in a regiment of Hungarian hussars at the outbreak of the Great War. In 1916 he was captured by the Russians. He had time to think in the czarist prisons, to talk in whispers with men of ideas, to develop at the pace of war and revolution. Red October freed him. He at once took command of a battalion of foreign defenders of the revolution against Wrangel and Denikin on the eastern front. In 1919 he fought Kolchak. In 1920 he was named brigadier-general, and under the direct command of Budyenni and Voroshilov had a leading role in the victory of Perekop. How natural it seems to him to be fighting interventionists in Spain in 1936!

We could fill volumes with the lives of the leaders. But let us not forget the rank and file—a rank and file full of color, made up of men who can replace those leaders over and over as the war may dictate. The Austrian armorer who miraculously built an armory for the brigade out of nothing. The bank employee. The Jews from Poland who have crushed the legend of the shivering Israelite

waiting helplessly to be attacked by his enemies.

We find a moment to talk with the student, Carlos Wainer. He lived in Cologne and belonged to a Catholic student association. Thru it he was unfortunate enough to espouse Christian Socialism, and after the Nazi victory in Germany did two prison terms. As he couldn't seem to come to an understanding with the German gods about the worship of the Aryan, he found a secret route out of Germany. And now he sits on a bridge where dum-dum bullets whiz by, reading the progress of the war against international fascism.

Shouts draw us away to the field kitchen, which the Italian cooks call *Ristorante Italiano*. It seems a wounded pig has been caught, and as it is only a leg wound can be cured—in the pot. In Burgos they say the loyalists go hungry, but the pot is very full here.

"How do you eat?" I ask an eighteen-year-old British boy.

"It's no war at all," he answers. "Meat, eggs, vegetables, and good cooking. Come up and see us some time!"

And the boy is the nephew of ultra-con-



servative Winston Churchill. Despite England's fence-straddling, even the diehard families find themselves contributing, in the spirit of Byron and Shelley, to the struggle for freedom of a heroic people.

III. *The Role of the International Brigades*: Just what is the International Column and what does it expect to be? I remember we asked that without result for some weeks before the anti-fascist fighters appeared on the Madrid scene. It was all very well to say vaguely that they were the representatives of the International People's Front, but there was many a "neutral" foreigner in Madrid to inform the questioner: "The Internationals are simply Red Army Men from Russia!" And to such a profound speculation, "objective" newspaper men nodded their heads gravely, saying, "That's possible."

That canard blushed itself away when the first (called Eleventh Brigade) got into action. The "Red Army men from Russia" turned out to be preëminently French and Polish, while the later Twelfth Brigade was German, Italian, and Franco-Belgian. Around these dominant strains in the two brigades were grouped representatives of every European country. In the French section of the Eleventh Brigade there were some fifty English-speaking volunteers (American, Canadian, British, Australian). The tiny spots on the map had their representatives: Denmark, Switzerland, Esthonia, and so on. Belgium gave over a thousand stout fighters!

The "neutral" enemies of the legitimate government of Spain took a new line. Very well, the Soviet Union had cleverly avoided compromising herself. She had not sent troops. She had called upon Communists of all countries to rush to Spain. The fact remains, they argued, that the republican army is not Spanish. Thus they drew an analogy, in bad faith, between the African shock troops and foreign technicians constituting the whole force of the rebel attack, and the international anti-fascist volunteers aiding the limitless thousands of Spanish fighters in the popular cause. Rebel news sources were more realistic. They spoke of the possibility of "delay" in the capture of Madrid because against Franco's single line of attackers the government could pour virtually inexhaustible reserves. Obviously three thousand International Brigadiers then moving into line could not constitute reserves! Reserves: that was the whole Spanish people. Then there is another difference between the Foreign Legion and the International Brigades. Among the thousands of militiamen, the hundreds of thousands of mobilized workers, intellectuals, democrats, the world anti-fascists move with comfort and content. Fighters in one cause, comrades against a common enemy, there is nothing in their situation to invite comparison with that of the German-Italian fascists and the Moors who circulate in civil centers among a people largely hostile to them.

From their arrival the Internationals began winning the respect of the Spanish people. At the front they worked side by side in com-

mon operations with the militia. Indeed, they spread their training and discipline in some cases by scattering their men at regular intervals through militia battalions and thus carrying out attacks. And in the cities, in Madrid, they fraternized with the whole people. Various organizations began to adopt given units of the brigades. In this way fraternization passed from an exalted symbolic unity to a warm personal relationship. Individual friendships were formed. When Madrid anti-fascists knew, and sipped coffee with, individual Polish anti-fascists, their sentiments evolved. They were men alike, anti-fascists alike, fighters alike for a world ideal. Respect and admiration turned into warm human love.

Hundreds of letters to the brigades accumulated. The Women's Anti-fascist Committee presented them with a banner. The Unified Socialist Youth held great meetings in their honor. Aware that no arrangements had been made to pay the brigadiers, the Communist cell in the Hutchinson Factory organized a collection for them. Section West of the Communist Party adopted a French Battalion. And so on: in Spain, where the Communists go, the people go, for the huge youth organization and the women's groups fully accept the leadership of the party in the defense of the democratic Republic. Under that leadership the people not only welcomed the International Column, but copied its best features.

With the full confidence and love of the masses, the brigades became a powerful force for the spread of essential military-political ideas. They deserve a great measure of the credit for the rapid acceptance by the Anarchists of strict military discipline. Two Anarchist columns that shared an action and a front with the brigadiers praised the Internationals to the skies, and formulated within the National Confederation of Labor and Iberian Anarchist Federation the demand for discipline. A few months ago the chief hindrance to the establishment of that strict central authority demanded by the war, was the fractionalism of the Anarcho-Syndicalists. A poster on the walls of all Spain reflected their stubborn creed of "Liberty" as against the reality of war. "Let us organize indiscipline," the poster said. Now Juan Peyró, one of their representatives in the cabinet, announces the abandonment of this position. "It is necessary that you, lovers of indiscipline, realize that now we must have a war discipline. . . . The members of the National Confederation of Labor did not go into the government to represent indiscipline, but, on the contrary, to demand discipline and the unified command. It is not permissible that there be six general staffs in the central sector, each of them independent."

That the International Column was largely responsible for the fullness of the Confederation shift soon received a practical proof. General Kleber, commander of the Twelfth Brigade, was placed in command of the northern section of the Madrid front. As there are units of all groups and types operating here, this was the creation of a model unified command, the first in Spain. Kleber could be

appointed because of the fine interpenetration of the Brigades and the Militias, and the spread of the International standard of discipline, which had convinced all groups that the army was not the instrument of parties or unions. As put by Peyró, "we Anarchists have nothing to do with running the war; that is the affair of the military men." And Republicans, Socialists, Communists, and Anarchists alike agreed that General Kleber was a first-class military man—of the people.

Now that the people know the Column better, they no longer think of the foreign anti-fascists as miracle men come to save Spain, a view reflected in the first days by the persistent "Viva Rusia" they shouted at Frenchmen and Poles. In those days they could not believe that the Internationals were other than Russians. The Soviet Union had stood by Spain. France and England had deserted. How could these be Frenchmen and Englishmen? Once they had learned that here were direct representatives of the French people, the Polish, German, Italian peoples, the real significance of the Brigades at last took form. They were not here as saviors, but as comrades experienced in fighting Reaction, to aid and encourage the Spaniards in their improvised defense against the fascist assault. Spanish battalions began to demand a place in the Column.

Units that had fought in the Guadarramas in July and maintained a high morale even in the discouraging days of September were so incorporated. This was more than an extension of fraternization; this was the outline of the real and unforeseen meaning of the Column. The International Brigades were paving the way for an international people's army, the army of the international people's front. The treachery of the military fascists had united virtually the whole Spanish people in arms against Reaction. Now the intermeddling of Hitler and Mussolini had provoked the arming of world democracy and the world proletariat against the war-makers. In their efforts to isolate the Soviet Union, the Nazis and Blackshirts had but created a new and tremendous reservoir of arms for the defense of liberty and progress, whether in Spain, China, or the U.S.S.R.



K. L.

# Chirico and Picasso

*Two much-discussed modern artists represent different tendencies in a cultural milieu affected by the ups and downs of the economic world*

By Charmion von Wiegand

THE ups and downs of capitalism are mirrored not only in stock market quotations but in modern painting. Both finance and art are frantically seeking to solve basic, mortal contradictions in the system in their own terms. Painting transmutes these crises in the economic world into its æsthetic and formal terms, a fact which had perhaps no better exemplification than in the lives and work of Picasso and Chirico, both of whom have recently come under special notice as a consequence of retrospective shows in New York galleries this season. Chirico, born in Greece in 1888 of Italian parentage, has been declared both a Surrealist and a pure classic painter. Picasso, born in Spain in 1881, is the leader of French painting.

While Picasso has held public attention almost since the beginning of the century, Chirico became a fashion only in the last five years—a period coinciding with the rise of fascism in Europe. His is an art which appeals directly to the reactionary intelligentsia seeking ideological support for fascism. It is clear that the destructive and uncreative movement, fascism, can develop no unity of thought and that therefore it is forced to plunder its ideas from Marxism, mysticism, and mythology, mixing them in a strange distorted *mélange* of disintegration.

The ups and downs of capitalism are the fundamental reason why a splendid artist like Picasso, instead of creating a single great style in art, has gone through the whole history of western art in the course of twenty years. This see-saw of change is not due to a desire to please a capricious market or to express originality so much as to the deep need of rescuing some synthesis from the ever-increasing confusion of social life. Chirico, in his own way, reflects this intermittent fever of change, but since he is less intuitively aware and less profoundly conscious of the conflict, his work appears more unified than that of Picasso. His range is much smaller. While both painters are necessarily representative of the old class, their direction marks them as moving toward opposite poles.

Chirico has never been a classic artist. His work is an attack on the Greco-Roman heritage of our culture. By nature necromantic and decadent, he deals with the corruption of the classic ideal, expressed in canvases populated with legendary heroes in togas, fallen Ionic columns, shattered pediments, wooden horses, Roman gladiators, marbelized arenas, and gilded laurel wreaths. These gaudy props from a provincial Roman circus hide ideas and feelings directly antipathetic to

classic art. In this they are related to the façade of classicism with which fascism masks its naked brutality and intellectual bankruptcy—for instance, its use of Roman *fascies* in Italy, of standards of Roman legions in Germany. Such historic hocus-pocus is merely a demagogic gesture toward the people. Chirico's painting mirrors this pseudo-classic masque of anarchy, yet it would be a mistake to confuse him with a real fascist artist. No matter how adulterated his art, he remains in the European tradition, albeit at the end of its road. The official fascist painters, so advertised in the late Venice international exhibition, dwell in no cultural *milieu*; they merely manufacture debased illustrations of modernism or hand-made chromos of the classics.

In his late work, Chirico has approached one step nearer this fascist disintegration. In his continuous exploration of the limits of corruption, he has descended to the production of chromos, as in several horse pictures à la Delacroix and two mawkish landscapes, "Flying Phantom." Such taste is akin to the fashionable resurrection of the Victorian what-not. In an effete society, imitation acquires its own value as genuineness once had, so that one prefers marbelized wall paper to marble, wax flowers to real ones. This is no new phenomenon in history, as witness the late Pompeiian and Roman frescoes.

In sharp contrast to Chirico, Picasso, despite some excursions into decadent bypaths (his Alexandrian water colors) has followed in the great line of European tradition, seeking

always to analyze form in space without the use of illusionist or illustrative means. Chirico deals with classicist motifs at the moment of their destruction under the impact of Christian ideas, selecting as models the debased, mixed art of the late Roman Empire. Picasso's work stems directly from the Renaissance—that robust period when the rising bourgeois class affirmed its faith in corporeal reality and set up the classic as its ideal, instinctively sensing the social kinship between the new commercial capitalism and the Greco-Roman world whose power also stemmed from commerce. In such periods of expansion, exploitation, and competition, earthly and individual man, long hidden under the hieratic priest robes, becomes the central theme of art, the æsthetic task, the conquest of anatomy and perspective. As capitalism developed to a higher form, the static aspects of the problem



Coffee and



Caucus