

## AFTERWORD

### AN HOMAGE TO MACHADO IN 1966

A DAY set aside to honor Antonio Machado, the great Spanish poet who died in exile in southern France in 1939, had been announced for the 20th of February 1966. The homage, notice of which was given all government bureaus concerned, was to consist of the unveiling of a monument to Machado—a bronze head made by the sculptor Pablo Serrano. The bust would be unveiled in the town of Baeza (Jaén Province), where Machado had taught French for several years in the local school; the monument was to be placed at a spot outside town, a particularly lovely spot often visited by Machado in his walks. The homage was announced under the title “Walks with Antonio Machado.”

The committee that organized it was heterogeneous, including the judge in Baeza as well as many writers and artists living in Madrid. The Spanish press gave considerable publicity to the plans for the homage. Several days before it, the weekly *Triunfo* in Madrid published a full-page photograph of the bronze bust, now finished, as illustration to an article written by Moreno Galván; at the same time a number of papers published declarations of support for the homage, plus various other testimonies of public sympathy for the project.

The day before the homage, a brief note appeared in several papers, its origin unknown, declaring that the homage had been canceled. By that time, most of the people who had intended to be there were already on the way from various parts of Spain—from Alicante, Seville, Córdoba, Valencia, Barcelona, Bilbao, Madrid. . . .

The Guardia Civil, armed with submachine guns, waited for the cars on all the roads around Baeza, several kilometers from the city limits. They stopped all buses, but let private

cars go through, at least in the beginning, though not without noting down the license numbers. Many people walked into town from that spot later, when private cars were halted.

Under these circumstances some 2,500 people arrived in Baeza on the twentieth, not counting another large group that did not succeed in breaking through the police line. The daily paper *Jaén* declared: "Today Baeza will render an homage to Machado." The crowd of people moved out of town toward the area of the monument. The line was long and silent, but the mood was a mood of affection and camaraderie among the admirers of the poet. Shortly before the line arrived at the spot, some Armed Police (popularly called "the Greys" because of their uniform) appeared and blocked the road. Several participants walked forward to ask for an explanation, which the police refused. A lieutenant arrived, and soon police reinforcements. There was great tension. The police lieutenant said flatly that the gathering was canceled, and that they had orders to keep people away from the place in question. He said he did not know the reasons why. He was asked to make known to some authority—the mayor of the city or the governor of the province—the unanimous desire of those present that some explanation be given them for what was taking place. The lieutenant refused this and threatened to charge the group. Those present pressed together in lines and made known their decision to wait there for the arrival of someone in power who would give them a good explanation. The effort these people had gone through to get here, many from places far away, should not be made to end in a simple return home under the arbitrary order of some member of the state police or an official of the constabulary.

The lieutenant took a step backward and blew a whistle. The police drew up in lines and took out their clubs. The lieutenant read a paragraph referring to "violations of the laws of Public Order" and announced that at the third blow of the whistle, the police "would charge" against persons present. Those present linked arms tightly, prepared to hold

to their decision to wait for a decent explanation of the cancellation.

The charge began. The Greys held back a moment. The officer drew his pistol and shouted, "Charge! Charge!" A policeman, also from the Political-Social Brigade, waved his pistol as if he were fencing, furious, absolutely out of his mind. "Charge! Charge!"

From then on it was brutality and violence. The crowd cried: "Murderer! Murderer!" Many fell down under the blows. Groans, cries; young people sobbed with fear. The Greys savagely pursued the few people who ran in the first moments, and continued to beat those who remained standing, both those facing the police and those trying to help others on the ground.

The large mass of people, after returning two kilometers, back to town, filed into the main plaza of Baeza in a mood of rage, exasperation and fear. Some took shelter in bars or cafés, from which the police expelled them by force, back to the street, where they were met with more violence; blows, insults and various indignities. Many arrests took place and the tracking began—the pursuit of people into every nook of town: new arrests and high-handedness.

The town watched this sight astonished. "Get to your cars!" the Greys shouted, pushing heavily against anyone and everyone. The deputies from the Political Social Brigade assisted them on all sides. Those who had no cars to leave town with were thwacked, chased, hunted into any shelter they could take. A long parade of cars fled by all the highways leading out, and those who arrived in Ubeda (a nearby town) could see the officers in the Guardia Civil barracks waiting for the order to go to Baeza.

This is what happened to the homage for Antonio Machado in Baeza the 20th of February 1966.

Twenty-seven people were arrested, among them José Moreno Galván (author of the article mentioned above); Pedro Caba (doctor); Eduardo Urculo (painter); Manuel

Aguilar (publisher); Roberto Puig (architect); Cortijo (painter); Ripollés (painter); Alfredo Flores (lawyer); J. A. Ramos Herranz (engineer); Pedro Dicenta (teacher); Carlos Álvarez (poet), etc.

Of the twenty-seven arrested, sixteen were released just before dawn. Eleven remained in jail, and were taken to Jaén and released there the next day, after they had paid fines varying according to the case from 5,000 pesetas to 10,000, 15,000 and 25,000 pesetas.

The report of an eyewitness

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