

Pistoleros! 2: 1919

Review

anon.

2010

Pistoleros! 2: 1919 is the second volume of the memoirs and notebooks of Farquhar McHarg, a seventy-six-year-old anarchist from Glasgow. Its writing was prompted by the murder of a lifelong friend.

McHarg's Chronicles record his evolving beliefs and sense of mission, and the remarkable adventures he experienced from the day he sailed into the neutral port of Barcelona in the spring of 1918, a naive but idealistic eighteen-year-old, and 1976. Farquhar's Chronicles are folk history, bringing the changes that shook the political and social landscape of Spain (and the world) between 1918 and 1976 into the framework of an adult lifetime. They make a vexatious but fascinating story that provides a deep insight into the spirit that moved the selfless, generous, occasionally naive and recklessly idealistic people who were involved in the bitter social struggles that marked the hectic insurrectionary and utopian aftermath of the great imperialist war of 1914 through 1918.

Contemptuous of traditional political parties and professional politicians, and inspired by the example—and the myth—of the Russian Revolution, these men and women aimed to rid the world of a cruel, corrupt, arbitrary and oppressive political and economic system that abused authority and exploited, degraded, tortured and murdered in the name of profit and power.

The transformation of the unworldly young Farquhar, in the climactic and rebellious years between 1918 and 1924, is fascinating to observe as he acquires consciousness and identity through his experiences in a world for which he is little prepared. The journey he embarks upon in these pages is not simply a personal memoir or an exploration of his own psyche. The many untold stories that unfold along his way provide an understanding of the thoughts and deeds of people who tried to rescue Europe from the cycle of disaster, war and death.

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