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[Please see my later article, "Unanswered Questions about Lorca's Death," available on my Web site.]

*The Death of Lorca*. By Ian Gibson. Allen, London, and O'Hara, Chicago, 1973. 217 pages.

This polemical and eminently readable book, probably the final one of this most controversial of topics, is a revised and expanded translation by the author of his original *La represión nacionalista en Granada en 1936 y la muerte de Federico García Lorca* (Paris, 1971). Gibson's strength is his exhumation and exploration of new sources, and where his book is good, it is very good indeed. He succeeded in talking to the evasive Ramón Ruiz Alonso, smuggling in with him a tape recorder, and unearthed a forgotten book of Alonso's, *Corporativismo* (Salamanca, 1937), which has important biographical information. He located and won the confidence of Angelina, the maid of the Montesinos family, who carried Federico his meals while he was in the Granada jail. By some wizardry he was able to consult in the newspaper's own office copies of the rightist *Ideal* for the initial days of the revolt. He consulted the cemetery records of Granada, and identifies and reproduces the death certificate of another man executed together with Lorca.

This is first-rate sleuthing, and from documents and numerous interviews Gibson has been able to establish some things for the first time and to provide substantiation for others. The uprising in Granada was surely accompanied by widespread executions. The operation to remove Lorca from the Rosales' house, where he was hiding, was undoubtedly headed by Ruiz Alonso, and he was taken to jail in the car of Alonso's friend Juan Trescastro. Once in jail, he was kept there several days, presumably so that the governor Valdés could consult with Queipo de Llano about his fate. Gibson knows even the names of the members of the death squad at Víznar, which he decided not to publish.

This is all the mechanics of the execution, however, and when discussing the more important question of the motives, Gibson's analysis is less satisfying. In an important clarification, he disproves the theory that Lorca's death was in retaliation for the supposed assassination of Benavente, documenting John Crow's

observation that the first news of Benavente's "assassination" appeared after Lorca's death. But he has nothing to suggest in its place, save Lorca's friendship with Republican politicians, and ends with the lame conclusion that "Lorca was assassinated by a state of mind" (p. 135).

There is a disturbing amount of previously printed information, some very important, which escaped Gibson's attention, which space only allows me to list: Antonio de la Villa, "Un evadido de Granada cuenta el fusilamiento de García Lorca," *Estampa* (September, 1936; reproduced in *Verdades* [número extraordinario, January, 1937], 7); Roberto Castrovido, "¿Vive el poeta García Lorca?," *El Liberal* (9 September, 1936), in *Verdades*, 8; "Confirmada la ejecución del gran poeta," *La Voz* (8 October, 1936), in *Verdades*, 9; J. B. Trend's letter in the *TLS*, 17 October 1936, Emilio Ballagas, "Federico y la muerte," *Social*, December, 1936, 24 and 41; the speech of Fernando de los Ríos, *La Prensa* (New York, 11 October 1937), p. 3 (cf. Vicente Sáenz, *Repertorio americano*, 19 [1937], 353-57, and John Crow, *Modern Language Forum*, 25 [1940], 179); "García Lorca fue muerto por miembros del partido Acción Católica," *La Prensa*, 27 July 1938; Martínez Nadal's introduction to Spender and Gili's translations of Lorca (London, 1939), p. xxvi; Richard Church, *Fortnightly Review*, 152 (1939), 226; and Lloyd Mallan, "Granada, Oh! Granada," *Fantasy*, 6, No. 3 (1939), 50-52. The first states, with precise detail, that letters found at the Huerta de San Vicente contributed to the decision to arrest Lorca; the fourth suggests that Rosales' house was not a safe refuge because two sons (i.e., Pepe and Antonio) were Falange members.

Gibson accepts, with no clear-cut explanation why, all that Luis and Miguel Rosales have told him, ignoring the implications of a substantial contradiction in their own testimony (p. 196, n. 23), and the fact that more than one scholar reports them as having said things they now deny. He never mentions the fact that the Lorca family to this day has not forgiven the Rosales, which would be very strange if it was, as Gibson concludes, the Lorca family that had told Ruiz Alonso where Federico was hiding and if the Rosales had protected him to the best of their ability and at considerable personal risk; apparently Gibson has never heard the persistent rumors that someone in the Rosales family had foreknowledge of the arrest and that the absence of all the men was no coincidence. Gibson dismisses all of Schonberg's evidence, partly on Luis Rosales' authority, and I believe that he is incorrect in doing so, at least on that basis. Schonberg's documentation is not always conclusive but I do not think he has invented his evidence—it would be much more convincing evidence if he had—and a thorough explanation would tell us how he came to

say the things he does. One of Schonberg's allegations, Ruiz Alonso's homosexuality, Gibson can refute only through Ruiz Alonso's denial, surprising when he has elsewhere in the book so thoroughly destroyed Ruiz Alonso's credibility.

Even though Schonberg sent me several letters with many interesting, although unsubstantiated, details, I cannot see the validity of his theories any more than Gibson can. The irony of Gibson's book, though, is that he himself has given us the first solid evidence—that is, other than that of Schonberg—that Lorca's assassination had other than a purely political origin. Gibson concludes that Ruiz Alonso and his two friends Trescastro and García Alix were the ones responsible for Lorca's arrest, and emphasizes that they were not responsible for any other arrests. Ruiz Alonso's current statements Gibson demonstrates to be full of contradictions; García Alix would not talk to him, and he ignores, again without saying why, a very blunt statement of Trescastro about his motivation (p. 128). Nevertheless, Gibson demonstrates, for the first time, that Lorca was in great fear of Ruiz Alonso in Madrid and before the outbreak of the revolt; Gibson concludes that "there may have existed between them some mutual antagonism" (p. 51). I am startled to see that despite the fact that Ruiz Alonso has been accused in print of causing Lorca's death for personal reasons, Gibson has apparently made no attempt to discover what this "mutual antagonism" was due to, and does not see any need to reconcile it with his thesis that Lorca's death must be studied in the context of the Granada revolt and subsequent repression. I was even more concerned when I found that Gibson misquoted Manuel de Falla, who was told on the day of Lorca's assassination, before any cover-up attempt began, that his death was either "un error" or "una venganza personal"; he later said that he had arrived at the conclusion that it was the later (José Mora Guarnido, *Federico García Lorca y su mundo* [Buenos Aires, 1958], p. 200; cf. Gibson, p. 108). If de Falla was mistaken, if he also was lied to, Gibson should say so, and tell us, if he can, why; by skipping over it in his paraphrase of the passage, he creates the presumption that he has no answer to it.

How this all fits together I wish I knew, but there are too many loose ends and uncollected pieces of the puzzle to accept Gibson's reconstruction in its entirety. Gibson is obviously a competent scholar, even if he gets a bit carried away with a justified indignation over the events in Granada in 1936. I hope he will publish a revised edition of his book with a definitive explanation, and put an end to the speculation which as things stand now is bound to continue.

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