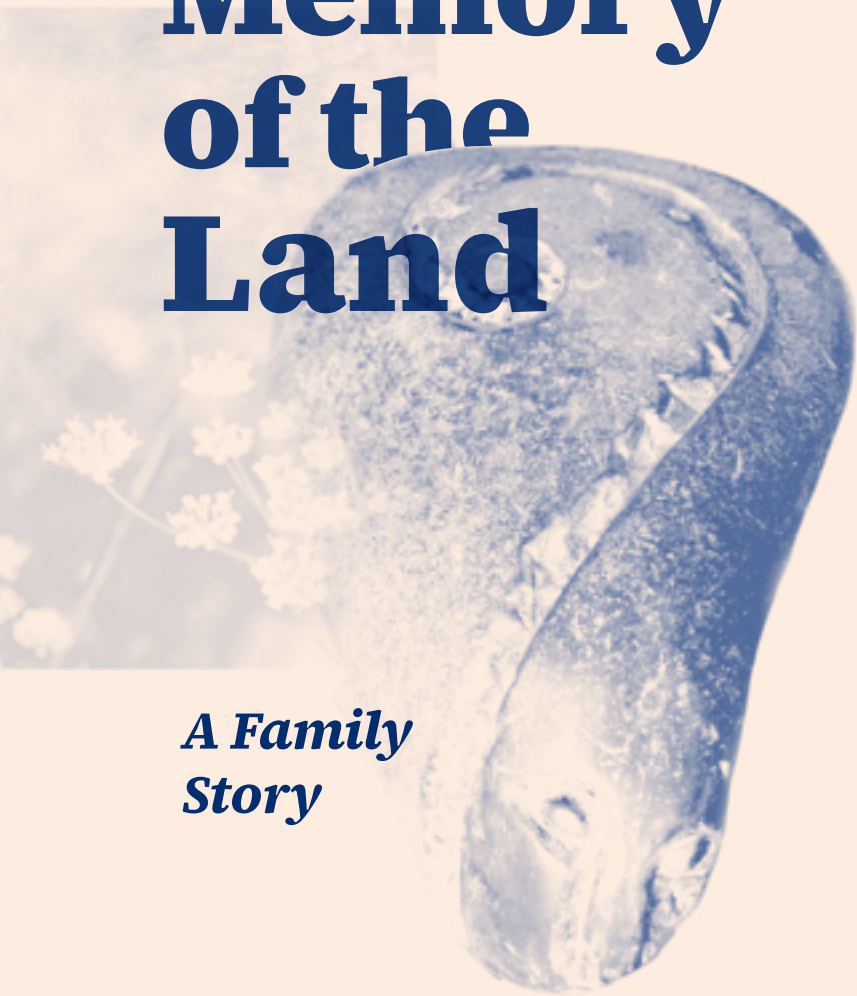
The Memory of the Land



A Family Story

The Memory of the Land

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The Memory of the Land: A Family History
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THE MEMORY OF THE LAND

A FAMILY HISTORY

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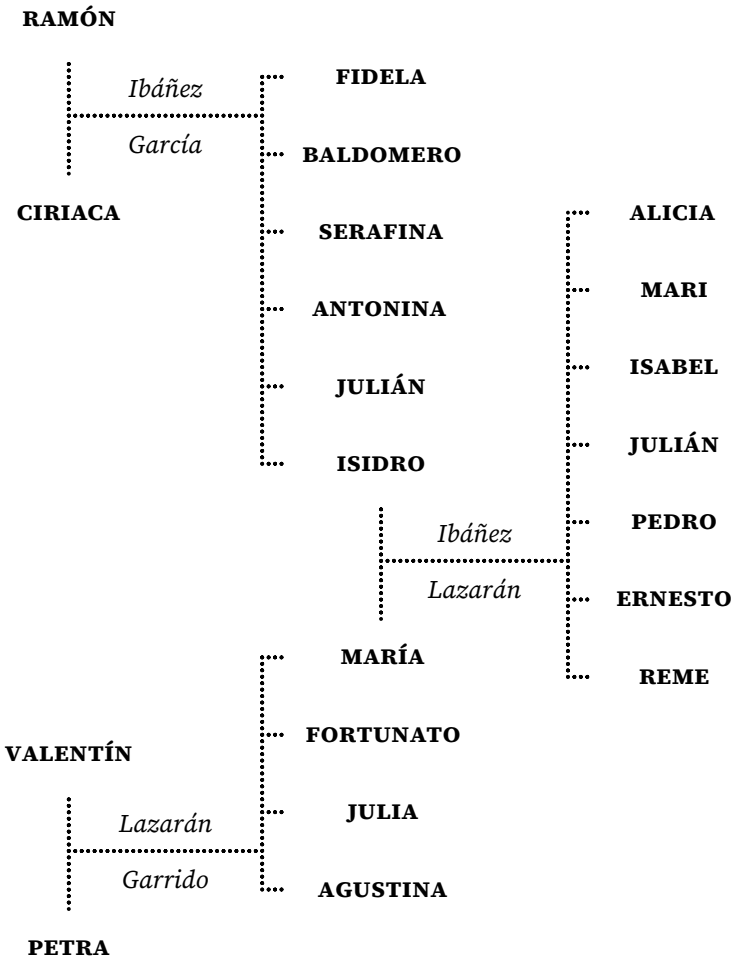
FAMILY TREE

The Ibáñez Lazarán family through their grandparents



We appreciate the collaboration of our friends who kindly read our first draft and gave us suggestions and ideas from the point of view of a reader who is not familiar with the family, which have helped us to substantially improve the presentation of the story so that it can be followed more easily. Among the most common suggestions, was to introduce a prologue presenting the protagonists of the story.

FOREWORD

I

Griegos is a town at 1,604 metres above sea level, located at the foot of the Muela de San Juan and surrounded by the Universal Mountains. This is the place where the Caranjainas lived, the Greedy Dragon and also our family. If something characterized our grandparents it was honesty, humility and hard work. They were true to their word, austere by nature and shared a passion for life.

Of the memories I have of vacations in Griegos during my childhood, for example, are the dirty streets, full of potholes. We played on our bicycles a lot, so inevitably fell foul of those holes and our knees were always bruised, bleeding and covered in scabs.

It is a place where our parents lived the paradise of their childhood surrounded by wild and beautiful nature. They ran free through the meadows and the mountains, looking for birds' nests and playing in the water from the many springs. They greedily gobbled the tasty bread baked by our grandmother and despite all the chores they had to do around the house, you can guess they were happy children.

This happiness was cut short by the Spanish Civil War and the events that followed. Those were very bad times for our family. Their property was taken away from them and

they suffered economic ruin. They experienced separations, loneliness, humiliation and prison. But, despite all these difficulties, their indomitable spirit kept them going and eventually saw them through to a new life in a new place.

This is just my brief introduction (the details will follow) so you know that if everything had been normal, Griegos would have been an idyllic place to live. In fact in the end it is *my place*, my origins and my roots, where it all began, and, where I now live with that sad melancholy of what could have been and was not.

CARMEN, PEDRO'S DAUGHTER

II

This is the story of our grandparents Isidro and María and their children Alicia, Mari, Isabel, Julián, Pedro, Ernesto and Reme. All the grandchildren have contributed, based on conversations with their parents and on the written memoirs of Julián and Mari. They left two writings in which they describe various periods of their lives in Griegos. They have helped us to assemble the story and we will make textual references to them throughout. We will write in the plural (we) except when someone wants to add a paragraph personally.

Mari (María Cruz) and Reme (María Remedios), both greatly disliked being called by their full names. Therefore, we will respect this and refer to them as Mari and Reme, respectively.

María Lazarán, our grandmother, and Isidro Ibáñez, our grandfather, began their lives as a family back in 1914 and had 7 children, whose names appear in the previous paragraph. They were our fathers and mothers, uncles and aunts. These were not propitious times for new families with political upheavals in the country, World War I, and a pandemic—a nasty cocktail to start with. Despite the fact that Spain was neutral in the 1st world war, it had a drastic effect on the Spanish economy. The people suffered badly, enduring shortages of basic foods, such as milk, meat and eggs. The Spanish flu also took its toll, having dire consequences in some regions of Teruel. María and Isidro had to fight hard just to get by and feed their children.

In this historical context, the first daughter, Alicia, was born (1916) and shortly after, in 1918 and 1920, the second (Mari) and third (Isabel). This was right in the middle of the so-called Spanish flu. In those years of scarcity and fear, more than 2,500 people died in the province of Teruel, and as is happening now with COVID-19, surely there were probably more, since many deaths were not "accredited" to the virus. Some towns in Teruel suffered many victims, but it seems that Griegos, perhaps due to its small population and relative isolation, was not as badly affected as others. Anyway, María and Isidro were able to overcome most of these obstacles, by growing much of their own food and making their own household and personal items—soap, butter and cheese, espadrilles, clogs, kitchen utensils, etc. Everything was made by them and / or with the help of their family and friends.

In the year of Primo de Rivera's coup, 1923, their son Julián was born and they undertook the construction of a bread oven and the purchase of another house next to theirs. At the end of the decade Pedro was born and in the Republican years, Ernesto (1931) and Reme (1934) came along, to complete the family. Their future looked rosy.

But very soon their cosy existence would be thrown into turmoil. There are still many changes and events to come that we will report to the best of our combined knowledge in the story to follow. With socialist ideals, Isidro and his brother Baldomero unionized in the UGT (Workers' Union) in the late 1920s, and collaborated with the Socialist Party and the Popular Front during the years of the Republic. With the Franco coup they found themselves in some very difficult situations. They suffered imprisonment, loss of property, and had to flee to save their lives. Despite how traumatic these times were for the whole family (as well as for many others), with a lot of effort, integrity and personal struggle they managed to survive.

It is a beautiful story full of life and strength. They never lost the joy and hope of living in a better world. It teaches us that the most important thing is life and that, even if everything is lost, if you stick together and work together it is possible to start over, to learn new things no matter how difficult they may seem even though you may be far from home and your beloved town. We, their descendants, thanks to their efforts and affection, were able to enjoy a much more comfortable and tranquil life than them. Because of the love we had for them, we want

to remember their memory through these pages, so that their teachings and experiences do not fall into oblivion, but serve as a historical and human reference to present and future generations.

Last, but not least, we wanted to evoke the memory of the local culture in which our grandparents and, to a lesser extent, our parents had lived. To paraphrase Wendell Berry:

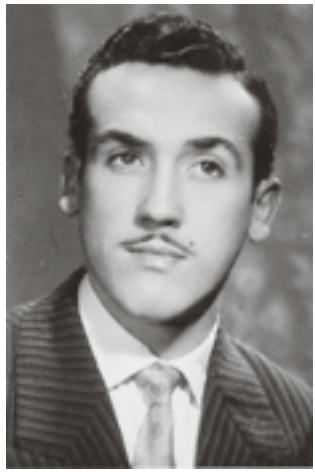
"On the one hand, that culture contains and passes on to future generations the history of the use of the place and the knowledge of how it can be lived in and used. On the other hand, the weaving of memories implies affection and respect for the land. This ultimately means that the local culture represents the knowledge necessary for the land to be used well and with affection and carries with it the implicit mandate that it must only be used well and affectionately. The true 'instruction manual for spaceship earth', is not a book that can be written by a human being, but the hundreds of thousands of local cultures that inhabit the planet".

Grandmother María.

Grandfather Isidro.

.....

Alicia.



.....

Pedro.

.....

Mari.

.....

Julián.

PART 1

.....

KEEP YOUR MEMORIES ALIVE

I. IN LA VEGA DEL CODORNO, THE MULETEER

Our grandparents together with their daughters and sons (our mothers and fathers) took care of the land and the mountains and lived in a close interdependence with them. For that reason when they needed to cut a tree they knew which was the most suitable, as much for them as for the forest. So it was that Julián, on that pivotal day, used his knowledge of the forest and...

It had already begun to snow when Julián, after a good while searching, found a pine tree dry enough to make firewood. He had ascended the mountain up La Muela de San Juan, with the mules. In spite of the day being so cold and threatening snow, they had sent him out for firewood. He felt the rage and the cold torturing him, because in that house whether it was raining, snowing or hailing, they sent you to do the hardest work. With these "*rojillos*" there was no humanity. He began to chop wood and it was already snowing heavily. When he had cut almost half, he started loading the firewood on to the mules, the snow kept falling and falling without stopping.

Julián had now been working hard for a long time. He had cut and loaded all the firewood and was about to go back down to the village, when he realised that he had no idea which way to go, such was the amount of snow that was

accumulating. For a moment, fear, fatigue and cold paralyzed him and he did not know what to do. Julián had not yet turned 17 but his mother, thinking of protecting him from being arrested by the Franquistas (followers of Franco), had sent him away from Griegos, to La Vega del Codorno, with that family. "They are good people," she said, Julián remembered, frozen and frightened. But... how wrong she was!

He stayed this way for some minutes, absorbed and confused but, finally, he remembered something his father always said: "When the roads are blocked by snow or you are caught in a storm, it is best to let the oldest mule go ahead and follow it". And that he did. The mule in question was called Cordera. At the command of "*Arre, mula!*", she alone began the march. Julián sighed in relief and hoped the mule knew what she was doing. So he followed her, along with the other two mules, trying to make sure the firewood did not fall off.

The cold and the fatigue were taking their toll on the mules, loaded as they were; and he too was finding the going very hard. They had started down at a good pace, but the snow was so deep that the mules fell from time to time and he had to unload and reload them each time, making the going slower and heavier. And it kept snowing and snowing and the night was already near. Julián was exhausted and cold, he had hardly eaten or drunk anything hot all day.

Finally, night fell and they still could not see the village. The mountain seemed endless; Julián could no longer even move his fingers very well. He was walking with the

snow up to his knees, thinking that maybe they would not make it to the village because their strength was running out, when suddenly, Cordera collapsed. Julián had just about given up hope and thought it was the end, when, to his amazement and sheer delight, she struggled back to her feet. He encouraged her with what little energy remained in him, weeping with joy and kissing Cordera repeatedly, saying: "You are the strongest of all." That day he really appreciated her intelligence, strength and determination, since, but for Cordera, he would, most likely, not have managed to return safely to the village.

He will always remember that light he saw in the distance, as if it were a star, and then another and another, and he was so happy that he even cried, because he was so numb with cold that he no longer knew what he was doing. Finally, after so many hours of struggle, they reached the village and the house. But to his surprise, anger and sadness, instead of being happy to see him safe, the "owners" scoffed at him asking what he had done to be so late. Julián gritted his teeth in anger and bit his tongue, because since he was a "red", he had to keep his mouth shut, as the "reds" had no right to say or do anything.

That was the day Julián firmly decided to leave, instead of continuing to put up with those people. But he had to tread carefully, since his father was already in jail and his 10-year-old brother Pedro worked as a shepherd in another house in town. And these "bosses" that he had were pure Falangists—especially the eldest son. He was the head of the town's Falange and the one who called

Julián "red" the most. The name-calling didn't bother him, because he was actually proud to be "red", but the more he was taunted, the more his antipathy towards them grew.

Besides, he had to keep earning the miserable wage they gave him. It consisted of food and 3 pesetas a day, which he was always paid a month in arrears: This, they said, would make sure he did not leave, because they would not pay him for the last month. The derogatory treatment they continually dished out to him was inhuman, he even had to eat their leftovers, and to sleep in the stable with the animals. People took advantage of the circumstances and exploited the "reds" as much as they wanted. These were bad times for social equality.

He always told his children and nephews that it was that day, January 23, 1940, when he made the firm decision to leave as soon as spring arrived. Then, he would be able to walk the roads without fear of getting lost or freezing in the snow. Every night, Julián longed for a better, more dignified and humane life, and that is why one day he plucked up his courage and left.

II. THREE YEARS BEFORE

Our parents were children when electricity came to Griegos and they were still children when the war started. They lived their few years in Griegos happily but, in a short time, they had to learn to survive and face sad, difficult and often dangerous situations. We have learned how they lived from their

stories and from the memoirs of two of them, Julián and Mari, whose quotes will appear on these pages.

Griegos had voted for the Republic in the municipal elections of April 1931. The victory was celebrated with great joy. There was great hope for change and improvement. People organised themselves into unions and associations and became very busy developing their ideas and making plans.

MARI.— The elections were greeted with great enthusiasm and participation. My father was elected councilor. There were rallies with inspiring speakers, and every day something new happening often with music and dancing. Uncle Federico (Juan's son; Isidro's cousin) participated actively and was a candidate in the general elections in the province of Guadalajara. Changes were also proposed at school, where the teacher Alarico wanted to introduce a system of four separate year groups, since there were four teachers. This could only be achieved if boys and girls were taught together, (something that had been prohibited in the past) otherwise they were limited to two levels, toddlers and older students. Everyone was happy and joyful, ignorant of how short that joy would be.

JULIÁN.— The discussions in the town used to revolve around politics, because, although small, in the town there were candidates representing the Socialist

Party, the Republican Party, Citizen Action, the Communist Party and I don't remember if any more.

The Popular Front won the general elections of November 1933 and in February 1936, there was also huge support for the Republican candidates in Griegos. Regarding the Municipal elections we do not know what happened, but it is certain that Isidro was a councilor for the Popular Front in that year of 1936, as evidenced by both the accusations of the Franquistas and the memories of his children.

Pedro said that in previous elections, grandfather had been mayor and that, then, he had proposed, and got enough support, to divert the road that went through the middle of town and instead, make a bypass and thus avoid inconvenience to the neighbours.

JULIÁN.— My father was a socialist and very active politically, always in positions of responsibility. When he was not mayor he was a councilor and also in those years he was a member of the committee of the Socialist Party. I remember that in my house meetings were held with other members of the committee, including Vicente González, "El Calores". He was even more involved in politics than my father, though with his outgoing personality, he still found plenty of time to enjoy a good party. In addition, his daughter Nati was very close to my sister Mari.

I used to attend all the rallies. Politicians came from Teruel and many other places, like Federico García

from Checa. He was my father's cousin, although we always called him cousin. Federico was a deputy to the Courts for several years and he was the best speaker in the province of Guadalajara, at least that is what my father and others from the Socialist Party said.

MARI.— But those of Franco could not digest the popular triumph and on July 18, 1936 the uprising and civil war began. Everything in our lives was changed. No-one spoke openly in these days. In addition to the shootings, women had their heads shaved and were forced to drink castor oil. If they resisted, they were beaten. Franco's supporters did this in all the towns that were left-wing, communist or red, as they called them. Anyway, this was a complete disaster for us.

After the July Uprising, the Civil Guard, aided by their right-wing supporters went through the towns forcing the removal of the Popular Front councils. In Griegos and also in Villar del Cobo the Republicans refused to hand over their town halls. A few days later, on July 28, the body of Teófilo Almazán the doctor in Villar del Cobo, was found in Orihuela full of holes—he had been killed with bayonets.

JULIÁN.— In those days there was total confusion and the Civil Guard, commanded by the Franquista rebels, went from town to town getting rid of the city councils, dissolving unions and any other associations that smelled

of the left and had been created during the Republic. In fact, Griegos had voted for the Republic in April 1931.

MARI.— The doctor from El Villar was murdered in Orihuela. He was a friend of my father, and from that day on my father did not sleep at home, but in the attic of my Grandma Petra's house, because there he could escape more easily if they came for him. Some time later, when our parents heard rumours that the Franquistas were approaching, they decided to flee from Griegos.

JULIÁN.— We had to abandon all our properties in the winter of 1936. I was then thirteen years old.

MARI.— We left for Cuenca at night through the fields, without going through the villages, because we did not know who we might meet. Our belongings were carried on two mules. I tell you this to give you an idea of what we left behind, but thanks to this, we saved our lives.

JULIÁN.— My father would have been shot for his political ideas, like so many others, when the Franquistas invaded the towns and cities. He decided to flee to Cuenca,(which was still held by Republican resistance fighters) through the fields with his wife and seven children. The oldest was 20 and the youngest less than 3 years old, riding on the panniers of a mule. In Cuenca, he thought they would be safer. Well, father

> loved his wife and children, and so he had rejected the invitation that the Government of the Republic made to all Spaniards who wanted to leave for France or other countries as he thought the risk of being caught by the Franquistas en route was too great.

Isidro and María, our grandparents, abandoned everything to save their lives. They left behind two houses, their land, the bakery, the animals... everything. They found themselves destitute, having to start over again, with seven children to care for and feed. With the reserves of money they had and the jobs that Isidro was able to find, they had enough to eat. Fortunately, he eventually got a job as a roadworker with housing included. They lived in the labourer's tiny house, the kind that was found on the side ot the road in those days. It belonged to the municipality of Carboneras de Guadazaón (Cuenca). There they remained, like refugees, until the war ended. Reme, the youngest sister, said that Republican soldiers regularly visited the little house where they lived as there was a military fuel depot nearby. She also recalled that when planes passed by and they feared there would be a bombing, they would make the little ones, Ernesto and her, lie down on the floor with a stick between their teeth to prevent the noise from bursting their eardrums. It seemed like a game to them.

Throughout their lives, our grandparents and their children, were grateful for the very good reception they had in Cuenca and how well they were treated. Getting a

job like that and with a house included was a real stroke of luck for them.

III. ISIDRO IS ARRESTED. MOTHER AND CHILDREN RETURN TO GRIEGOS

When she finally got news of Isidro, María Lazarán collected her seven children together and prepared to return to Griegos immediately. Isidro, her husband, had been arrested and was in jail.

They had been living for more than two years in Carboneras de Guadazaón, Cuenca, where grandfather Isidro worked as a road labourer. During this time, their little house had served as both a town and a refuge for them. Then, on April 8, 1939, just after the war they heard that anyone who had not committed a "crime of blood" could return to their hometown, since "he would not be arrested as long as his conduct as a citizen was correct." Isidro decided to return to town immediately, but they agreed that he would leave alone as a precaution and Grandma María would stay with the children until she knew what was really going on.

JULIÁN.— My father preferred to go alone and verify that what Franco had promised was true. Thus, he convinced my mother to wait for the results of his investigations and to take care of her children. Since he had no crime of blood, he should not have anything to fear.

> The days passed and we continued without news, until, finally, we found out that he had been arrested and imprisoned. This caught us all by surprise and we were very upset, because my father had not done anything wrong, except to remain faithful to his socialist ideals. The only crime they attributed to him was that during the Franco uprising of July 18, 1936, he had been secretary of the Socialist Party committee and deputy mayor, and he was one of those who refused to hand over the City Council to the Civil Guard.

When they discovered that Isidro had been arrested, the whole family set off for home (Griegos) through fields and mountains with their few belongings carried on the two mules. It took almost two days, as the young children, Ernesto and Reme, only 7 and 5 years old respectively, needed to stop from time to time. María kept a watchful eye out for trouble as they went. She thought with horror about the hardships that awaited them and how she could protect her daughters and sons. She was a strong woman and had worked hard to raise her family. In those years, women married young and had many children. She was barely 17 when she married and, in addition to giving birth to 4 daughters and 3 sons, she had also suffered two miscarriages.

When they eventually reached Griegos they headed for their old home, but to their shock and horror they found someone else living in it. María did not resign herself to the situation and sought out the assistance of the

Civil Guard; but the war had changed many things and the house no longer belonged to them. Feeling bitter and desolate, but full of courage, she sought help at her brother's house, and fortunately, he was at home. They were welcomed with open arms and there, at least, María and the children found some comfort during the first terrible moments of their difficult situation.

IV. A DISMAL OUTLOOK

When she returned to Griegos, María found that her house was occupied by a disabled ex-combatant. The situation was not irreversible and it could possibly be resolved in the Court of Political Responsibilities, but, at least for the moment, the family were left in the agonising state of not having a roof under which to shelter.

JULIÁN.— In addition to putting my father in jail, they took all our possessions, houses, bakery, animals and fields, but thanks to my uncle, who helped us out a great deal, we did not go hungry. It was not a good feeling to see how other residents of the town, directed by the mayor, occupied and kept our property.

They stayed at the house of grandmother María's brother and thanks to that they were able to survive those days while María tried to recover her belongings, or at least the house. Several times she tried to talk to the people

who occupied her house, but it was in vain. Then one morning she went to file a lawsuit, because she could not resign herself to losing everything they had worked so hard for. As she was marching back to her brother's house, a civil guard stopped her and warned her that if she persisted in trying to reclaim her property, he would have to arrest her. (According to Reme the civil guard had taken María aside and told her in a friendly manner, to stop trying to get her property back.)

Their troubles did not end there, far from it, because after a few days, the three older sisters (Alicia, Mari and Isabel) were arrested and taken away without any explanation. They cut all their hair off, gave them castor oil and paraded them around the town making fun of them, calling them "red" and humiliating them. The three girls suffered much abuse which they never wanted to talk about, as it had been too traumatic.

JULIÁN.— The worst thing was that my older sisters Alicia, Mari and Isabel had their hair cut, they walked them around town and put them in jail, although I don't remember where and how long they were imprisoned.

They had been betrayed by the "others" in the town, those on the right and the jealous opportunists amongst them, who had taken away their houses and animals and behaved so badly towards them. The effect of this treachery on them was such that years later, rebuilding their lives in Zaragoza, they did not want to hear anything at all

about Griegos, much less to return one day. The eldest of the sisters, Alicia, 23 at the time, was imprisoned in the Molina de Aragón prison. The other sisters, Mari and Isabel, aged 21 and 18 respectively, were eventually released on condition, pending a final ruling.

We can imagine the terrible days spent by Mari and Isabel released from prison but under strict constraints, confined, unable to go out and expecting the worst. They never wanted to give us details or talk about it. They were so traumatised. In addition, they had no news of their sister Alicia and that distressed them greatly. After some days they were re-arrested and taken as prisoners to the Teruel jail. They were terrified because they knew the treatment that was dished out to "red" women because of their socialist ideas or just for being the daughters or friends of Republicans. In addition, the Franquistas often shot and murdered any non-Franquista who dared to leave town without their permission, so running away was not an option. They had already killed the doctor at Villar del Cobo and Isidro's uncle Juan, the secretary of the Checa town hall as well as several other family members and friends. Apart from all this, Isidro was in jail under sentence of death. We do not know how many days passed in this way, but they must have been extremely worrying times.

Grandmother María was devastated, as she saw how her family was being destroyed in front of her eyes, but she was powerless to do anything about it. Her husband Isidro in jail and her daughters too. She forced herself to be brave and think about her four young children, Julián,

16, Pedro 10, Ernesto 8, and Reme 5. Her fears for Julián and Pedro in particular prompted her to come to a decision to send them away from Griegos. This, she hoped, would keep them safe from the Franquistas, for whom age was no protection against their atrocities.

María's brother knew some people in La Vega del Codorno and so, with his help, she got in touch with them and came to an arrangement. Julián would work as a mule keeper in a house recommended to her and Pedro as a shepherd in a different house. Grandma María even gave them some money to take care of the children. She had doubts about the "agreement" and was torn inside, but she preferred that her children were safe, at least until she got the house back or the situation became clearer.

JULIÁN.— Feeling helpless, my mother decided to look for work for my brother and me, aged 10 and 16 respectively. Thinking that we would be safer out of Griegos, she sent us to La Vega del Codorno, Cuenca, my brother as a shepherd and me as a muleteer. Poor mother could not possibly imagine what awaited us in the house of those "good people" as she believed.

V. TREATED LIKE SLAVES

Julián and Pedro's lives in La Vega del Codorno was one of semi-slavery and mistreatment. This could not continue.

Poor Pedro was treated very badly. He had long, grimy, tangled hair that hadn't even been washed or cut once. He slept in the stable with the animals and ate what little he was reluctantly given by his “hosts”. He thought about escaping several times, and he looked at the mountains constantly, trying to remember the way back home. This torment accompanied him day and night. It was his only company, since the “owners” did not speak to him, apart from giving him orders and insulting him. Even their daughter did not call him by his name, which he had almost forgotten as he rarely heard it. She called him “piggy” and insulted him by shouting: “Piggy, piggy eats shit in a trough!”

His young age, not yet 11 years old, and the feeling of helplessness and vulnerability inhibited his instinct to flee. This was probably a good decision, because without food and shelter the chances of achieving his goal were very slim. He was also unsure of the way to go and his fear of being attacked by wild animals, did not encourage him either. Instead, it was Julián, his older brother, who despite his nervousness and uncertainty, made the decision to leave.

JULIÁN.— One day, tired of the slavery to which I was subjected, I took my few belongings and left. I had only the clothes on my back, some hemp-soled espadrilles for the holidays and, a scarf and walking stick. So I grabbed my scarf and my stick and set off for Griegos, to join my mother and my sisters and brothers. I was so nervous, I even forgot my ration card.

When he got to Griegos, Grandmother María convinced him that it was better to go back, swallow his pride and try to recover the money he was owed and the ration card.

JULIÁN.— My uncle Vicente accompanied me, because, if not, they would have thrown me out on my ear. They didn't even want to give me back the ration card, and without it, I couldn't buy any of the little food that then was available to eat. This was their retaliation for me escaping their mistreatment.

Uncle Vicente though, was a skilful negotiator, and after talking for an hour or more, he managed to get Julián's wages and ration card back, whilst enabling his "hosts" to maintain their dignity.

JULIÁN.— From there we went to see my brother Pedro who was with another family, working as a shepherd. I still remember the anger and helplessness I felt when I saw him, so dirty, badly dressed and thin. We stayed with him for the short time we could and then we went back to Griegos.

Maybe Pedro hadn't even recognized Vicente and Julián, because later he didn't remember anything of this visit. When Julián told his mother everything he had suffered and, above all, what his brother Pedro was going through and how malnourished and sad he looked, she burst into tears. She had always taken care of them and

kept them clean and well dressed, and she could not believe that her children were in such a precarious and inhumane situation. She blamed herself for having believed that those families were, at the very least, going to treat her children kindly.

Without wasting any time, Alicia and Uncle Vicente went to find Pedro and bring him back home. Pedro had already spent several months in La Vega del Codorno, but for him it was a lifetime. In fact, he came to think that this would be his life forever. He had begun to adjust and slept comfortably next to the animals in the stable and even to taste and share their food. He came to think that he had no human relatives and that the animals were now his family. He had forgotten the beloved faces of his parents and siblings, which only appeared in some dream or memory floating inside his young head. From time to time (he told his nephews many years later) the smell and pleasant memory of a highly desirable pork chop would come to mind. He was so hungry all the time.

This situation would have been traumatic for an adult, but it was much worse for a 10-year-old. That is why, after months without daring to speak, he could no longer find the words to respond to the "owners", nor to the unpleasant girl who made fun of him so much. He was treated as a slave with no value or rights as far as his "owners" were concerned. He did not even have the right to speak, and since they were the only people he had any contact with in all that time, he spoke little... When Uncle Vicente arrived

with his sister Alicia, she saw him even more emaciated and skinny than she had imagined. At first she thought he was a girl, as his curly blonde hair fell to his shoulders. He was wearing the same clothes that his mother had dressed him in the day he left, only now they were dirty and torn. Pedro looked at them in a confused, sad, expressionless silence. Alicia tried to hug him and, after a first rejection, Pedro fell into her arms crying. He still couldn't get a word out, but he finally recognised his sister.

Alicia, after a long hug and a re-assuring chat, left Pedro in the care of Uncle Vicente and went to talk to the owners. Once in front of them, she could not stop herself giving the miserable woman a good slap in the face. How dare she mistreat her little brother in that way. In addition, they had given her money to feed and take good care of Pedro. Alicia was absolutely livid. She had never been so angry and gave the woman a sound tongue-lashing to go with the slap, before returning to her uncle and brother. They made their way home between tears, curses and laughter, lots of laughter, because the joy of seeing each other was greater than any other feeling.

VI. THE THREE SISTERS

The return of Julián and Pedro to Griegos was marked by new and dreadful surprises. Alicia is taken to jail again along with her sisters. This time to the Teruel jail. But we do not know when they were incarcerated or when they were eventually released.

Now the four youngest children were together with their mother, living with their uncle (or occasionally with their grandparents Valentin and Petra). The older sisters were still in prison, although all three were in Teruel. Alicia, apparently (information is sketchy) was imprisoned in Molina de Aragón, although we do not know for how long. From there, we think she was conditionally released. During this time we have deduced that she was a few days in Griegos—and it was then that she went with Vicente to fetch Pedro from La Vega del Codorno. Later she was put in the Teruel prison, where perhaps her other two sisters, Mari and Isabel, were already held.

There is little that we have found out so far regarding the dates of entry and exit from the jail(s) they were in, since they were always very careful not to say too much to us, but we know the damage they suffered, and how ruthlessly and unjustly they were treated. Like so many other women in the rural world, they were victims of lies, denunciations, accusations and punishments for the simple fact of thinking and defending ideas in line with those of their parents and their community. Many times, simply, for being the daughters or family of a socialist, as was their case. On rare occasions, they talked about their stay in jail and that every day they were told to sing something like "Cara al sol" (a Franquista "anthem") with their hands raised in a Nazi slaute like the Franquistas, and end by saying aloud "Franco, Franco, Franco...". They remembered that there was a woman who, instead of that, shouted: "Tranco, Tranco, Tranco" (her small act of

"rebellion"), and how those who were close to her feared that the prison guards would hear her and punish them all. For the rest, they mentioned the filth they ate and the constant mistreatment they received at the hands of the guards—beatings, strenuous work, days without food...

The memory of their happy days in Griegos, with their family, going to school, and playing with their friends in the grass, kept their spirits up. Remembering how they learned to make bread and take care of their animals, the walks to the Cobeta spring, or to their favourite "Celada" (sinkhole), the one with the gigantic stone snail in the bottom and the songs they sang around La Malena (100 year old pine tree). All this nostalgia and pain they turned into hope. For the three sisters, Alicia, Mari and Isabel, it was doubly painful because, apart from their lost youth, it prevented them from continuing their studies and developing their job opportunities. Firstly, several years in jail (about three) or out on conditional release with curtailed freedoms. Secondly the added difficulties of being women and republicans (reds), with a prison record and without sufficient preparation to carry out jobs other than cooking, housework or farm labour (for which men were preferred anyway). Starting all over again was no easy task.

Isabel was the most affected, because she was very young and had such a bad experience in prison. She was least able to cope with the trauma and she carried that burden with her for years. She never set foot in Griegos again, and she cried every time we asked her something about

jail. She was terrified, and said that she resisted a complete breakdown thanks to her sisters doing their best to look after her and support her, and also to some other prisoners who treated her with affection and gave her good advice.

The three girls had been born and raised in a small town, in a very loving and protective family, with ideals of improvement in their small community, enjoying what they had, the mountains, the pastures, their games and entertainment. They did nothing wrong, nothing reprehensible, nothing except to work, study and help their family. They were punished for thinking differently, for defending more just and democratic ways and socialist ideas. In short, for believing that a better world was possible and trying to achieve it.

Like them, many young people, suffered abuse, felt hunger, became homeless and lost their families. Many were murdered.

VII. TO ZARAGOZA

Thus they continued for a time, the older sisters in jail and María with her four younger children living in her brother's house in Griegos. But soon things changed again.

Grandfather Isidro had been transferred to the Zaragoza jail. Although the sentence is dated August 10, 1939, the transfer did not take place until the following year. Then Grandmother María found herself in the position of having

to choose between continuing to depend on the generosity of her brother and other relatives, or looking for a place and a job in Zaragoza, near Isidro.

JULIÁN.— Days went by like this, with my mother trying to find a better solution for the whole family. Finally, through the mediation of my cousin Paco, who was a sergeant (army or police—we do not know) in Zaragoza, she found a job as a housemaid. The dilemma was what she should do with the four children, who she desperately wanted to keep with her. In the end, we decided that I would stay in Griegos for the moment and my brother Pedro, 11 years old, Ernesto 9, and Reme 6, would go with her to Zaragoza.

María rented a room on England Street. They lived, ate and slept in that single room. She worked in a house doing household chores and cooking. The owners of the house were good people and they paid her a salary and food, which was what she cooked for them herself. This is how María and the three youngest children organised themselves for a while: Pedro, 11, Ernesto, 9, and Reme, 6 years old. Meanwhile, Julián was in Griegos taking whatever work he could find to get by.

JULIÁN.— I stayed in Griegos with my uncle Vicente and aunt Julia, working for some of the good people who still remained in the town for whatever wages they offered me. I also found some work with my uncle

Fortunato, my mother's brother, who was a builder and he took me on as a bricklayer's labourer and also fed me much of the time.

But I kept thinking about going to Zaragoza with my mother and for this I needed to save some money. Several months passed, and then one afternoon, I was with my cousin Gregorio chatting in the square, when a friend named Alfredo approached and said: "Julián, I was looking for you to see if you wanted to help me take 500 sheep from the lambing pens in the village to Linares de Mora (Teruel). It's about 60 km more or less." I accepted willingly, as there was a chance of making some good money.

It took us two weeks, because it was the time when the sheep were lambing and during the first few days many produced young. It was impossible to attend to all the births, and at the end of the day the donkey that we had to carry our food and other things, was loaded with newborn lambs. We estimate that more than 300 sheep lambed on the trip. As the days passed, we realised that it was not possible to take care of all of them, and so many of the newborns who could not keep up with the rest of the flock had to be left by the roadside.

When we got to Linares de Mora, of course, the sheep were counted and, although some were missing, the owner was very happy with the job. I think I remember that the settlement amounted to about 75 pesetas, a price that we had agreed upon when they hired us in Griegos.

From there we walked to Teruel. I stayed in Teruel with the idea of going to Zaragoza as soon as I could, and meet with my mother and my three little brothers.

With my savings I bought some corduroy pants that cost me 7 pesetas and a similarly priced shirt. I spent the night in Teruel at Gerardo and Balbina's house. Balbina was my father's cousin; they had eleven children, but, in that house, despite being such a large family, everyone who entered would find a bed to sleep in. Gerardo and Balbina were generous, kind-hearted and wonderful people. One of the boys was called “el Pato” (the duck) and he was always ready to accompany you wherever you went and “help you have a good time”. There was another smaller one who was called “el Predicador” (the Preacher) because at any time he would get on a stool and start imitating the priest in the church. In short, each one had their own charm and now they are just as charming as then.

As I say, I went to Zaragoza to be with my mother and immediately found a job as a bricklayer’s labourer. In the house where my mother was working, the owner, Don Paco, and his brother had a cabinet-making workshop, where they made dining room and bedroom furniture. The workshop was on the ground floor of the house and the living accommodation on the first floor. Seeing the dire need that my mother was in, having to care for and feed four children, they thought to make another apartment. So they built a second floor just for us, so that we could live together

more comfortably. By then, my brother Pedro was already employed as an apprentice in the workshop. He was only 11 years old, but took so much pleasure in cabinet-making work that his skills were progressing very quickly.

The two little ones, Ernesto and Reme, were going to school, because the first thing Grandma María did was find a school as close as possible to them. Ernesto attended the Cervantes and Reme went to Andrés Manjón. Grandma bought a white sheet and she made them the clothes that they had to wear to go to class. She was clear about one thing: her daughters and sons would learn to read and write, and the four rules (addition, subtraction, multiplication and division), at least that! And she succeeded—and much more, as we will see.

JULIÁN.— This is how we lived, while others were taking advantage of my parents' properties in Griegos. Thus we began a new life far from our village, from our home, our land and animals, with my father and my older sisters in jail. We knew little about their situation, and lived without knowing if we would meet any of them ever again.

But even in these hard times, life has its way of providing some light relief. According to Reme, before buying the little house on Montañés Street, they had rented a small apartment—we believe—on Bardají Street, that

opened on to a large courtyard. In one of the apartments nearby, the neighbours kept a large monkey. One day the monkey escaped and ran across the courtyard, up and down stairs, scaring everyone. Pedro was coming home at that moment and came face to face with the animal. "Monkey! Monkey!" he screamed running as fast as he could until he reached the door of his apartment, much to the amusement of all the neighbours.

VIII. FROM JAIL TO JAIL

Isidro toured half of Spain, from jail to jail—Teruel, Zaragoza, Burgos, Santiago de Compostela—while his family, mired in uncertainty, tried to get ahead in Zaragoza.

The authorities did not communicate anything to the families of prisoners. Often they were moved from one jail to another or new sentences were passed invalidating the previous ones. Some were executed and their families knew nothing. Nothing, until some tip off or, finally, the authorities deigned to inform them. Many families, like ours, suffered terribly, not knowing where their loved ones were or whether they were being badly treated, or even if they were still alive. Sometimes, as in the case of our grandfather Isidro, the prisoners were transferred hundreds of kilometers away from where their family lived and the family was not informed. They did not even have the right to that information.

In addition, it was not easy to obtain permission to visit imprisoned relatives. One had to apply and wait days and days to get the permit. Visitors were also only allowed a few minutes with their loved ones. Many times, the jail was not located in the same town or city, so they had to travel, often many miles, sometimes only to find that their loved one had been moved elsewhere.

For this reason, although María and the four youngest were managing from day to day in Zaragoza, a part of their family was missing from their lives and this caused them great pain and a feeling of emptiness. Father was still in prison awaiting execution (although it seems that by this time the sentence had already been commuted to 30 years). Since they did not receive any communication and they did not know, their suffering and anguish become worse and worse every day. And the sisters were still in jail (in Teruel?), too.

Let's listen again to Julián, who expressed his experience very well:

JULIÁN.— As soon as I arrived in Zaragoza, my mother took me with her to see my father, on the first visit that she had been allowed. When we got to the door they searched me from top to bottom and only let us in one by one, first my mother and then me. When I saw my father, I was not allowed to hug him—we were kept two metres apart and separated by a metal grille. I greeted him and said,

"How are you, father?"

And to my surprise, he looked at me for a moment and asked me:

“Are you my son, because I don't recognize you? Which of my children are you?”

“I'm Julián,” I told him, and he began to cry and so did I.

We continued talking, he asked me about all my brothers, if we ate well, if we were in good health, if mother was coping well, etc. Because visits were short, we had barely time to say much, but my father tried to console me and himself, telling me that when he gets out of jail the whole family will be together once again.

I left that visit very happy and I promised my father and myself that I would visit him again as soon as possible, and I told my mother so.

As soon as the next visit was allowed, my mother and I came in clean clothes and a little happier than before. But we were stunned and speechless when they told us he was no longer there. Both my mother and I thought the worst, because when we asked where he was now, they did not give us a clear answer. They said that they did not know and that perhaps he had been taken for a walk. We knew what this meant—that he had been taken out and shot. We came home in a torrent of tears, my mother completely shattered and undone.

Some time later, after having received no information for two months, despite our insistence, we were almost convinced that he had been killed. Then, we

received a letter informing us that he had been transferred to Burgos prison. That day filled us all with immense joy, we told each other over and over again: "He's alive, he's alive!" Furthermore, in the letter they told us that they had commuted his death sentence to 30 years in prison.

Some time later my sisters were provisionally released and came to live with us in Zaragoza. They found work and things began to improve for the family. They were eventually granted their unconditional freedom in 1943.

With all these hardships, the family tried to make the best of their lives. Julián working as a bricklayer, building the second floor of the house where his mother worked; Pedro as an apprentice in the carpentry workshop; the sisters, doing any jobs they could find—cooking, cleaning etc. But another event was heading in Julián's direction:

JULIÁN.— One very windy day, the north wind blew over a wall we were building. It was just my luck that I was underneath and the accident left me with bad head injuries as well as a few other cuts and bruises to the rest of my body. I had to spend several days in the clinic of Paseo Mola. When I left, my mother decided that I should change jobs, so I went to work in a sausage factory on Borja Street, owned by Eduardo Marín. My sister Mari had been working there, since she got out of

jail. I worked there with my sister until she found a job as an apprentice to a seamstress.

From then on, everything is rather obscure. We do not know how long Isidro was in Burgos or what happened during that time. Our parents and grandparents never told us. Despite the efforts we made to find out, we still do not know when he was transferred to Santiago de Compostela. We, the granddaughters and grandsons, knew that Grandfather Isidro was imprisoned in Santiago for about seven years. We know that it was a very depressing place and that he had a very bad stomach there, because of the quality and quantity of food they were given. We think he developed a stomach ulcer, but, thanks to a skilful doctor from the infirmary who carried out emergency surgery, he was able to hold out until he was released. Reme used to remember with a bitter grimace that it was the only good thing that happened to him in prison, and that he was very lucky to have such a good doctor who probably saved his life.

Grandfather said that almost every day, as soon as the prisoners woke, guards would line them up and pick out several individuals. They would then be loaded onto a trailer or truck and taken to a clearing on the outskirts of the city. There they were once again lined up. Thus formed, they gave the order to shoot a few prisoners and the rest were returned to the truck and back to jail. Thus, day after day, year after year, it is easy to imagine that those who did not become physically sick still

suffered from severe depression or even a complete mental breakdown. You cannot imagine a worse torture. Every night he felt that it was very possible that it would be the last of his life. One or more times, we don't know for sure, Grandmother went to see him in jail. She cried when we asked her to tell us something, but we could never find out more, because we didn't want to see her suffer like this.

Later, in Zaragoza one day, Grandfather went to the hospital and met the same doctor who had saved his life. They talked about their time in Santiago, treating each other as if they were old friends. And it is that one certainty, that despite everything, there are always good people around, wherever you are and wherever you go. That's what our grandparents always said when finishing their stories. And that's how they were.

IX. AT LAST, ALL TOGETHER IN ZARAGOZA

In that little house on Montañés Street there was hardly room for everyone.

As soon as they could, the family bought a little house, since they were already all working, except the two little ones. Reme recalls that for the first few winters they could only make one coat for Mari and Isabel to share and that they were always fighting over it when they had to go out, they were still so poor.

We, the grandchildren, remember it fondly. The house was rather small and gloomy and only had one floor. From the unpaved street one entered directly into the living room, which also doubled as a bedroom with a lift-up Turkish bed, and acted as a sewing workshop with an old Alfa sewing machine. As you can imagine, there was barely enough room for the refrigerator which was cooled by blocks of ice bought from Mr Simons store on Montañes Street. Hung on the wall was an engraving of a bridge spanning a river in Manresa, which fascinated Jose Angel, one of the youngest grandchildren and was probably the only decorative piece in the room.

A corridor led from the living room to a bedroom and the kitchen at the back. In the kitchen, a door opened onto a small patio which housed a shower. From the patio stairs led up to a flat roof with a room which contained two beds. A few years later, the grandchildren Carlos and Alicia remember having spent many good times playing there. There was a cupboard in the kitchen with a shelf that they always rummaged through to find the powdered milk that the Americans “gave away” to children, in a kind of second “Marshall plan.” They didn't like the cheese they sent at all and their interest in the milk was more out of curiosity than because it tasted good. María patiently endured her grandchildren’s “curiosity” while she cooked on the charcoal stove or fussed over the sink. From time to time she sent Carlos to buy milk at a nearby dairy, always reminding him that the milk had to be from the “inside” (Milk from inside the

dairy had not yet been watered down). She wanted to make cream with the milk, also butter and cheese. She knew how to do many things. She made laundry soap using caustic soda; moisturiser from glycerine and lemon, and she was a crochet and knitting artist.

It was the second half of the 1950s and the grandchildren knew nothing of the summer of 1943, when Alicia, Mari and Isabel were definitively released, according to a document signed by Military Judge No. 7 in Zaragoza and addressed to the Provincial Court of Teruel. This suggests that until then they were on something like provisional release. Isidro would still take several years to reunite with his family. Although we do not know exactly when that was, it is almost certain that in 1947 or 1948 he was already in Zaragoza. At that time, they set up a small shop selling coal in Alcañiz Street which ran off Montañés Street, where they lived.

In addition, Grandmother María, working from home, began to do sewing for others. She bought a sewing machine and made dresses, shirts and other items for the women in the neighbourhood, as she had done before in Griegos. Her daughters helped when they had no other work and during their free time. They always had quite a few orders to fill. At this time, everyone was working except the two little ones, Ernesto and Reme, who went to school. Their new life was, little by little, becoming both more bearable and more secure. The coal shop and sewing business were both going well. Pedro, despite his youth, immediately stood out as one of the best carpenters and

cabinet makers at the carpentry school which he attended. Determined to improve even further, he won a scholarship to study for five years at the Vitoria School of Arts and Crafts. Thus he became a master cabinetmaker. Over time, he would open his own workshop, Peiba, on Daroca Street.

Ernesto was not far behind. He soon discovered that his passion was to colour the world. He asked his parents to enroll him in an art course and so, after leaving school, he would go every afternoon to study and develop his skills. Years later, after finishing his studies, he found work in the industrial painting sector in Zaragoza. His sisters vividly remembered how when he arrived home, he would whip off his overalls, and swallow a large glass of milk in a couple of gulps to wash away all traces of the solvents.

His company sent him to Switzerland to learn some of the vehicle painting techniques they were using. He was there for about a year and on his return, he brought his niece Alicia a box of paints, which she still keeps to this day. She began to paint with them, but decided that she wanted to keep them as a memento and did not want to "use them up". Ernesto, in addition to his work, continued to paint pictures throughout his life. And they were truly precious. All of us have at least one painting by him in our homes. But for some, our favourite painting is his self-portrait.

Mari was also finishing her apprenticeship as a dressmaker and was beginning to have commissions as such. Alicia had various jobs, cooking and cleaning during the early years; but what all of her nephews remember with great fondness are the years when she set up an ice

cream kiosk. We all went to see her, if possible every day of the summer. “I want chocolate”, “Me, cream”. Aunt Alicia was like her grandfather, always laughing and playing with the little ones. Circumstances would lead her, over time, to land in Madrid, where she worked in domestic service, and then to settle, already married, somewhere in La Mancha. Isabel also found her way in domestic service, first in Vic and then back in Zaragoza.

X. HOW WE CAME TO KNOW BORJA

The time between seams forged an indelible relationship of fraternal friendship.

That was how things went along when an occasion worth noting presented itself. Amparo a friend from Guadalaviar, who knew the quality of Mari’s work, introduced her to a family from Borja (a town about 70 km from Zaragoza) who wanted someone to do some sewing for them.

Mari went there for a season, making various dresses and other commissions that Mrs. María entrusted to her. At that time, Mari grew fond of María and her daughters, Cecilia, María and Cita, and they of her. So they started a friendship that still lasts to this day. We all remember with great affection and gratitude those good times after our family first met that of Mrs. María de Borja. Aware of the hardships that had passed in Griegos, they tried to help and support our family as much as they could. In

addition to the work and the kind attention they gave Mari, they loaded her with food every time she left to return home, so the family all ate very well in our grandparents' house.

At this time, they were also looking for someone with some experience with animals and agriculture who they could trust to look after their livestock and land. So they offered Julián a job, which he gratefully accepted. Off he went to live and work in Borja as a muleteer, at first, and then after a while, as a foreman, since he was very good at everything related to farming. Antonio, the younger brother of Cecilia, María and Esperanza (Cita), remembers that they loved Julián very much and says that he was like an older brother. Antonio also remembers Julián leaving the house one day to get married. His girlfriend, Aunt María Jesús, was from Borja.

Many years later, during the summers, we continued going to spend a few days in Borja and the Santuario de Misericordia. They were so nice and so affectionate with the children, that we always wanted to go back even if it was only for a few days. For us they were and are like part of our family, and we think of them with great affection, because people as good and kind as they were are not found every day and even less so in those post war years. We always feel they are a part of us and we will never, never forget them.

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Roadworkers' house

(Carboneras de Guadazaón, Cuenca).

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Pedro in "Parque Grande".

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Pedro and Julián in "Parque Grande".

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Ernesto and Pedro.

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Alicia in the ice-cream kiosk.

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Pedro and Isabel.

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Pedro and Reme outside the basilica of "el Pilar".

PART 2

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THE LAND NEVER FORGETS

I. LIFE IN GRIEGOS (1916-1936)

There were really very few peaceful years for the family in Griegos. For the 3 little ones (Pedro, Ernesto and Reme) it was just their childhood and for the four oldest (Alicia, Mari, Isabel and Julián) it was their childhood and their adolescence. Much of what we know of this time has come to us through the memoirs of Mari and Julián.

MARI.— First my sister Alicia was born, then me and then Isabel. Then the first boy arrived, Julián, who filled us all with happiness, except Isabel. She was jealous that Julián got all the attention and she was too young to understand why. I was 5 years old and I was crazy with happiness as I had always seen how frustrated my parents were because they only had daughters (another girl had already been lost in a miscarriage).

From very early, around 7 years old, Alicia helped her father with his work in the fields "equal to or better than if she were a boy," her sisters used to say. Isidro took her to teach her little things about the fields and how to care for the cows and mules. Mari, who was 5 years old, would bring them lunch if they were working nearby.

MARI.— I really liked going with my sister and my father, because he taught us the names of many plants and insects. He showed us the birds' nests, but never allowed us to touch them otherwise the parents would reject their eggs. We saw how the birds incubated their eggs. We watched the eggs hatching and how the parents fed their chicks for weeks, until one day we would go and the chicks had flown.

Of course they were still little girls, and from time to time they got into trouble for being just a bit too eager. So one day Mari learned the hard way that working with animals carries its risks:

MARI.— We had a cow called Marinera that had given birth to a beautiful calf, which we named Ascensora. They were in a field (I think it was called, Fuente de San Roque) on the way to "Las Celadas". I was overjoyed to see the calf with Alicia and my father.

We had a picnic lunch in the field. My father got himself ready to yoke the mule to the plough with Marinera. Once he was ready to start ploughing, he would give them the instruction "arrebuey", but before that, it was necessary to get over to the other side of the stream. My father crossed with the mule and called the cow to follow. Under normal circumstances she would have obeyed without question, but she was very protective over the newborn calf and refused to cross.

To try and encourage her, I yelled "Cow Cow!" and waved the lunch basket at her. Unfortunately for me, I was stood rather too close to the calf, and with a very loud and angry "moo", Marinera charged me. She butted me and sent me flying over the hedge. That did not satisfy her completely and she was still searching for me when my sister Alicia jumped up and chased her off with a stick. Meanwhile, I lay very still, trying not to breathe, as I had heard that bullfighters pretend to be dead when they have been tossed by a bull. My father came down the hill in two strides, crossed the stream, and lashed out at the cow with his sharp stick which was similar to a pike used by picadors.

Luckily for me, Marinera had caught me between her horns. I had blood from a small wound on my head when I fell and scratches on my face. My sister cleaned me up and when I got home my mother cut my hair around the wound so it wouldn't get infected.

The day Pedro was born, Alicia, who was already 13 years old, had gone with her father to the olive press and would not return for several days. Thus, Grandmother María was alone at home, with two daughters aged 11 and 9 and a 6-year-old son. It was February 22, 1929.

MARI.— When Pedro was born, my mother gave birth alone, completely. My father had not yet returned from pressing the olives and this time my sister Alicia had gone with him, so there was one less mouth for

my mother to feed at home. I was asleep when Pedro arrived and my mother called me to go and find Aunt Serafina, my father's sister. She attended the women from the village who were in labour, assisted the births, washed the babies and tied the umbilical cords. That was the assistance poor women had.

In those days, women worked in the fields and took care of the animals when necessary, in addition to all the "household chores" such as washing, cleaning, sewing, spinning, weaving, etc. In fact, women knew how to cope with many things. Of course, their work was not valued as much as that of the men, as is still the case today, since women are often paid less than men for doing a similar job.

So the years went by until things began to change. Some people, as always seems to happen, were not happy with the peace that we breathed. Let's see how Mari recalls this time:

MARI.— Ernesto came into the world on March 24, 1931. That summer, my father took me to Checa to stay with my great uncle and aunt, Juan and Juana. Their daughter, my aunt Sabina, was a dressmaker and I wanted to learn the trade. So, I helped my great aunt and uncle with the housework in exchange for learning to sew with my aunt Sabina.

They had two other children, Federico and Humberto. As a result of the war, Humberto had to go to Argentina, and a brother of Juan's and another brother of my grandmother emigrated with him.

When I went to Checa, I was very young and had just turned 14 years old. There, I spent most of the day doing housework and only in the afternoon could I sit down a bit to sew. That's how 3 years of my life passed, before I realised that I could not make a future there. I wrote a letter to my parents to tell them that since they were coming to pick me up for a festival in Griegos, I would stay with them and work in the bakery, because in the summer there was always a lot to do. I had no intention of going back to Checa.

In addition to the normal work in the bakery and the fields, the harvesting, mowing and other summer work was fast approaching. Added to this, Reme was born, the youngest of all my siblings, and a good excuse to stay in Griegos and not return to Checa. It was good timing—I returned home with my parents on June 29 and the war started on July 18, not a month had passed.

The truth is that many times I have thought that I do not know what would have happened to me had I stayed in Checa. My uncle Juan, who was 72 years old at the time, was shot by the Franquistas who had gone to his house in search of his son Federico. But Federico had escaped so they took the father instead. You can't imagine the state in which the family found itself. Total desolation. In addition to the loss of the father and without knowing where the son was, the elderly mother (Aunt Juana) and Sabina, were left without resources. Juana endured it badly, very badly,

and she died soon. Federico, when he found out, become crazy and believed himself responsible for the death of his father and also soon died.

It was 1934 and Reme, the youngest, had already been born. The last of seven children. Now, Julián was 11 years old and he began to help in the fields and with the livestock. Then, Alicia would accompany them if they had to stay away for a few days, for example, during the lambing season. She would keep the little stone cabin tidy and do the cooking as well as helping with the animals. Julián sometimes felt that all this work was a bit of an imposition on his "free time".

JULIÁN.— When I was 11, I often felt harassed with all the work. My father took me to help with the cows and sometimes I did a good job and other times, not so good! I remember that it was hard work, because if the plough was loaded with soil, I could not move it.

Later, when I was older, I began to enjoy the work more, especially when we went to work for several days in the fields. In particular, I liked going to Sierra Molina. There we had a calving pen for cattle and a cabin that served as a home. My older sister, Alicia, used to come and she, in addition to working in the fields, also made food while we continued working. We also collected sainfoin which is good forage for the cattle, but we only let them eat in moderation because if they eat too much it doesn't suit them.

II. SCHOOLDAYS AND PLAYDAYS

School occupied a very substantial place in the lives of the children, who attended as much as possible. Isidro and María were determined that their girls as well as their boys would benefit from a good education. According to Mari's memories, only one generation previous, the one of her mother, school was exclusively for boys.

MARI.— We (Mari's generation) went to school when we were 5 years old, paying the teacher something, which was bread, or potatoes, I don't remember it very well, I only know that until the age of 6 it was not an obligation to take the children to school, but my parents had great interest in us learning. My mother used to say: "I don't want them to be illiterate, like me." She could read and write quite poorly. When she was a child there was no teacher in town.

In the early years of the twentieth century, if a girl's parents were interested in her learning at least to read and write, they had to find a woman to teach them, paying in money or in kind. The public school was only for boys.

MARI.— Aunt Anastasia, a lady from the village, taught girls how to read and write. Parents paid her in money or in kind. Anastasia was my father's second cousin and when I met her she was already married with two handsome children. For the boys there was

a "proper" teacher and so my father knew how to read and write very well but, above all, he was excellent at mathematics. He clarified many things for me about the decimal system because maths teaching for girls was very basic at that time. We learned reading and writing and the four rules—addition, subtraction, multiplication and division, together with some geography, grammar, geometry, religion and the catechism. All from memory.

And... catechism. All children traditionally learned the catechism at church, but even there, there was discrimination between girls and boys.

MARI.— In addition, we would go to church to learn the catechism with the priest and we would kiss his hand, which, by the way, smelled of incense. The older girls taught the younger girls and the priest attended to the boys.

In the years of the Republic, a teacher named Alarico López Teruel, from Albarracín, proposed to eliminate these discriminations and incidentally, to improve the teaching for all ages at our school in Griegos, by teaching mixed sex classes.

MARI.— The teacher Alarico wanted to introduce a system of four separate year groups at school, since there were four teachers. Classes at that time were single

sex, with two teachers for girls and two teachers for boys. He said that if boys and girls were taught together, they would be able to accommodate four different levels, otherwise they were limited to two, toddlers and older students.

The intervention of Franquismo prevented this: In the early years of Franco's repression (1941-1942), around 25% of all teachers were sanctioned and removed from their profession. Alarico was amongst them.

Julián notes how keen his parents were for the children to attend school, but he was not quite so interested... Let's see what he has to say about it:

JULIÁN.— I started going to school very early, because my mother wanted us to learn as much as possible. Mornings at school were very long for me and recess time very short. We played games like *tango*, *tú la llevas* and *churro mangotero*. We played every day. All our spare time was filled with play and still it seemed extremely short and we always wanted more.

But, they also had to get used to a certain discipline:

JULIÁN.— Every year the Inspection came in the company of some authority of the town and at that time, it was my father's turn as he was the first Deputy Mayor. The Inspector asked the boys questions, the most difficult to those sitting at the front table. Those sitting in

the middle or to the back of the class generally got easier ones, but with an occasional silly one thrown in.

I remember that he asked the first table "Is Spain an island or a peninsula?" Since they did not know the answer, the question passed to the second table, where I was sat. The truth is that I was also not very sure but answered confidently, "Peninsula" and the Inspector asked me to explain why. Then, I was reminded of what I had heard from my sister Mari, who was very studious. It stuck with me that Spain is a peninsula because it is surrounded by water everywhere except on one side which is the Pyrenees. I remember the expression of satisfaction on my father's face and also of Don Emilio Martín the teacher. Of course, I also felt as proud as a peacock. But, from that day on my studies became a little more complicated, because even the slightest difficulty encountered by my classmates was referred to me. I had to study more and more, and I rued the day that I had answered that question.

The trouble was if I failed to answer the questions the children laughed at me and that annoyed me a lot. So that day served as a stimulus to study better, pass my exams and to master Geography and History above all. Both became my strength.

All these school experiences occurred when I was between 9 and 11 years old. My father was very keen on me to continue my studies and I also convinced myself of this and that I would like to become a teacher.

Of course, sometimes, our games were just too much fun and we neglected our studies. Then the teacher would punish us, by depriving us of recess or making us stay in class for half an hour more in the afternoon. This, unfortunately, altered our plans and significantly reduced our play time.

Pedro was a child when they had to flee from Griegos, just 7 years old, and he had only attended school for two years. Probably for this reason, what he most remembered and used to talk about were the silly tricks he used to get up to.

For example, he told us that one day he took his father's pocket watch to school, and, feeling important, he would occasionally take it out and glance at it, imitating his father's gestures. Then he would put it back into his pocket. He did it over and over again, took it out, looked at it, gestured, and put it back into his pocket. The teacher thought it was funny and at the end of the class he went to talk to Isidro and tell him about the watch. The grandfather laughed and told the teacher not to worry, it was an old one and didn't work anyway.

In winter, children used to wear shorts and high woolen socks covering their entire leg. Grandmother María knitted the stockings and socks herself with the wool of the sheep, once it had been washed and spun.

MARI.— As footwear in winter, we used clogs that were made by the men there. My father made them very

well. My grandmother and my mother had a spinning wheel and used to spin wool and then use it to make stockings and socks. Later on, I remember, they used to take the fleece to a nearby town where they had the wool spun on a machine for them.

Pedro got into the habit of pulling his stockings down below his knees during class so that he could "kneel and crawl and jump around without spoiling them". He was still a very young child, but certainly provided lots of entertainment.

III. HOUSE, BAKERY OR ANIMAL SHED?

As the family grew, it became necessary to expand the resources to support everyone, so they thought of setting up a bread oven. They bought the house next door and set about re-designing their home. Mari and Julián will explain the details:

MARI.— My house had two stables on the ground floor, one for cows and the other for horses, also there was a patio with a pigsty, hen house and rabbit hutch. We also had a shed for sheep and goats, located on the edge of the village. In winter they were locked inside and my mother had to go two or three times a day to add feed and water. It was very hard work shovelling her way through the snow especially since it was very icy underfoot.

On the first floor there was a large kitchen and a living room with an alcove. The kitchen had a huge fireplace, alongside which was a stand with large shining iron pots. A second stand held pitchers of water. There were also some shelves for crockery. There was a large bed in the living room and two beds in the bedroom. My parents and the young ones slept on this floor. We older girls had a room on the second floor.

My parents bought the house next door to ours, using the ground floor for the animals and the upper floor to store their feed, giving us more space in our house. The ground floor of our house, with time, was converted into a bakery and to go up to the first floor living area they made an outside staircase.

Bread was sold or exchanged for other foods, the most common was to exchange it for flour. It was also sold to neighbouring towns.

MARI.— Actually money did not exchange hands very much, because there was income only from what surplus could be sold from the harvest and the animals. New lambs were sold in spring and, in addition, the sheep were sheared in June and their wool was sold to a factory in Molina de Aragón. Marinera produced a calf every year and the mare also had her foal. The hens contributed chickens and eggs some of which we ate, and some of which were sold and the money used to buy espadrilles.

They cared for the animals and loved them like part of the family, even to extremes that today might make us smile:

MARI.— We had milk from the goats. One of the goats, Pepita, had such a big udder that my mother fashioned her a "bra" to support it, so she wouldn't rub against the bushes and hurt herself.

JULIÁN.— My mother and my sisters made the bread and, in addition to the household chores, they took care of the pigs, chickens, ducks, lambs, and other animals. We all had our jobs to do, and we all did our bit because all these tasks were necessary to support a large family like ours.

Everyone worked hard to get the bakery up and running. Bread was not lacking at home. The excess was sold or exchanged, usually for flour. The change was established in a ratio of 100 kilograms of flour to 115 loaves of bread.

IV. SPRING INTO SUMMER

The children helped the adults with the housework and lent a hand wherever they were needed and, always, according to their particular talents. Of course, their studies came first, as our grandparents were very strict with this. But when the end of the school year came and classes were over, the grain harvest began. Then it was everyone out into the fields to collect the wheat.

MARI.— We were very young but we already had a sense of responsibility and we helped where we could, Alicia with my father in the fields, while I took care of my younger sister and brothers Isabel, Julián and Pedro. Pedro was eleven years younger than me and he was practically under my care every day at harvest time, as my mother was much more efficient than me at picking lentils and ervil (bitter vetch). I took good care of the children and the house.

JULIÁN.— As time passed and I got a bit older, my father used to give me more jobs to do in the fields, such as grazing the cows in the morning and milking them, so we had enough milk for our own consumption. After this task, I would go home to get ready for school. Then my father would go with the cows to plough the fields. Sometimes I had to go back to meet my father after the work was done, to take the cows to the pasture, where they spent the night. In the meantime, my father went with the mules to get wood for the oven.

Spring time in Griegos always arrived late, and provided the children with the possibility of enjoying one of their favourite jobs:

JULIÁN.— In the months of May and June we collected wild mushrooms. *Carderas* mushrooms, which grow amongst the thistles, are white and taste exquisite. We cooked mushrooms in many ways and we liked

them a lot. We also peeled, cooked and ate the stems of the thistles.

The mushrooms of the meadows grow where cattle, horses, sheep, etc. graze, they are very good and also highly sought after by the cattle that eat them willingly. We were struck by the fact that where the mushrooms sprout, the grass is greener and forms a half moon shape. We liked mushroom picking more as a game than for food and we used to be very respectful of them.

So, our life was very entertaining and at the same time very healthy. We ate a lot of vegetables especially and meat from animals that were well treated.

In the summer, everything was subordinated to the harvest:

MARI.— In summer we worked a lot because the harvesting of the entire crop was done in little more than a month and a half. Everything was done by hand: mowing, collecting lentils and ervil etc. The wheat was threshed using mules to pull the threshing board, which had sharp flints on the lower surface. All the children helped out where they could. The products of the threshing were collected together in a pile, to wait for a favourable wind to do the winnowing.

The threshed wheat was thrown up into the air with a pitchfork for the wind to do its work. The heavier grain would fall immediately to the ground to

make a heap, whilst the chaff would be blown away by the wind forming another much larger pile. After this, all the grain is passed through a sieve so that it is clean and it is then bagged. It is measured in bushels (1 bushel = 36.4 litres), which is also used as a measure for wood. Once all this was done, it was loaded onto the horses carried home and stored in the granary.

JULIÁN.— Once the threshing was finished, winnowing began and it was usual to take advantage of a windy day, as it was easier to separate the straw from the grain. The straw was carried to the hayloft and the grain to the barn. We all joined in to transport the harvest home, from the smallest to the largest. We used anything we could find, some with blankets, others with sacks, to carry our loads. We would take a break in the era (the place where we threshed the wheat) to have a snack and we had a blast.

Ervil, barley and oats were ground for animal feed, wheat was ground to make bread. The lentils were bagged, some to eat at home and others were used to barter for other foods, such as honey or apples.

MARI.— In my house there were several barns, one for each kind of cereal, wheat, barley, oats, ervil, etc. The lentils were kept in sacks. The ervil, barley and oats were taken to the mill to grind. The flour was then mixed with the straw and provided good animal feed. Wheat was also ground to make bread.

At the mill you had to pay in kind. Once I went with my father to Tramacastilla mill to take care of the mule while he took care of the milling.

Lentils from Griegos were delicious and had a well-deserved fame, but we only used them for our own consumption or to "barter" for honey or apples. The potatoes were also very good, completely rainfed, and so they kept well all year round. They were also used to feed the hogs. In the vegetable patch, lettuces, cucumbers and green beans were raised, and cabbages for the winter, which we sometimes ate in salad.

Although now an adolescent we already know that he much preferred to play all day rather than work. You can probably guess who we are talking about. Let's hear Julián again:

JULIÁN.— Summer time was overwhelming for me, because as I was on vacation, almost all day they had me employed in tasks around the home and in the fields, especially in the harvest. When the time came, my father and the workers began to mow at dawn. Later my mother would send me with the lunch, which I used to take with the help of a horse. When they finished lunch, I went home to get some food for myself and then went back to work. Between lunch time and dinner, I always tried to take time out to play with my friends and prepare for our "excursions" in the countryside.

After the mowing, the threshing would come. I enjoyed this more because I liked to climb on to the threshing board and drive the poor beasts harder to make them run. I pressured them so much that, sometimes, they would come off the "track" and my father would get angry. He would make me get off the threshing board and take command to teach me how to do it. I usually managed to avoid the back of my father's hand, but, anyway, as soon as I could, I would be up to my old tricks again. Besides, I enjoyed a little risk and it did seem rather boring to go slowly on the threshing board if I could make it more fun by speeding things up a little bit.

Every September many people, including our family, went to the Orihuela Fair to buy and sell. There they would spend their hard-earned money on necessities for the home. They made some extra money by selling animals and their surplus produce.

MARI.— All sorts of animals were bought and sold at the Orihuela fair, which was held in mid-September —calves, foals, pigs, goats, sheep, chickens, rabbits, pigeons and also cows, mares, horses, mules and donkeys. There were also lots of different food stalls selling everything you could think of, from fried cod, doughnuts, peanuts, toasted chickpeas, walnuts, candies, honey and melons to pacifiers, shoes and espadrilles. Of course it was great fun there.

V. AUTUMN INTO WINTER

Winter comes early in the Universal Mountains. And there was still one last harvest left—the potatoes:

MARI.— Then, just before the beginning of October, we would start to pick the potatoes. We all went to help, young and old. First my father turning up the furrow, the rest of us with baskets to fill up and take to the pile. Then we sorted out the fattest ones from the small ones and put them in separate sacks. The small potatoes were for the pigs, cooked and stirred with flour or bran to fatten them up. The rest of the year they ate thistles, beet and potato leaves, lettuce, and dandelion as well as herbs from the field which we collected for them with a large basket.

Sometimes, we spent the whole day in the fields picking potatoes. With dry leaves and firewood we made a fire. We covered the potatoes in the hot ashes and they roasted divinely. In addition, my mother would pack a snack for us, some wine for my father and there was always a small spring nearby where we would drink fresh water. We would return at dusk, tired but happy.

Although pork (meat, sausages, black pudding, etc.) was the main food in our diet—we had legumes, cabbages and oranges which we had bartered for our potatoes. A woman from the town made regular trips to Valencia, taking potatoes and exchanging them for

oranges. There, they wanted the potatoes for planting. Also the priest's family, from Gea, would exchange apples and pears for our potatoes.

In November the first pig was slaughtered, followed by the second in February:

MARI.— The slaughter was a big event. At home, two pigs were slaughtered, and we used to make black pudding, chorizos, longanizas and other kinds of sausages. Every part was eaten. Because the air was so pure and cold at that time in Griegos, the cured hams were delicious. One of the pigs was killed at the end of November and the other in February, in order to have black pudding for the winter and spring and to allow time for the hams to dry. Some of the sausages were preserved and, in this way, there was food for the summer, because when the reapers came to cut the wheat they also had to be fed.

Slaughter time was also like a big family party because my aunts and cousins came to help salt the hams and prepare the black pudding and sausages, and all the children came too. The older girls helped bring water to tie and wash the sausages. Much of the family was reunited at this time and we used to have a grand feast.

And when the winter tightened its grip, the children found yet more ways to have fun in the snow:

JULIÁN.— In winter the snowfalls are common and heavy. So we used our clogs to "ski". Clogs were essential to walk in so much snow and almost everyone wore them. They were made in the houses, with pieces of wood worked into the shape of a sole. They were about 2 or 3 cm thick and attached to the shoes. To do this, holes were made around the clog with an auger and, with handmade esparto grass cords, a toe and heel were woven and, finally, they were attached to the shoe by passing the cord through the holes and around the ankle.

When the snow was soft, it was not easy to ski, so we stamped on it and compacted it very well and, in this way, we could put our skiing skills to the test. But the next day after it had snowed, there was no need to do anything because the snow had already frozen solid. In those days we used to ski every spare minute we had, before entering school in the morning, at lunchtime and then in the afternoon. We held championships and everything—we had a great time.

Anyway, I remember the way we lived and how happy we were as children. Winter was freezing but still, we had our fun and games. We made tunnels in the snow and quite well done by the way, because sometimes cows, mules and horses would pass over the top and the roof would not collapse. When we got tired of skiing, we used the tunnels for our cops and robbers games, chasing each other through the maze we had made. Other times, we had snowball fights, usually in two teams. Often a snowball would

"go astray" and hit a passerby. When this happened, we ran to avoid the "reprisals".

The technological revolution reached Griegos and was met with great enthusiasm by some and trepidation by others. Although electricity had come to town a few years earlier and there were electric streetlights, they still did not have electricity in the houses. So, of course, the house was heated with wood-burning stoves. The one in the kitchen served to warm it up and also to cook.

MARI.— In the autumn we collected pine cones to burn in a stove that we had in a room downstairs. We went with the mare who carried large saddlebags which we filled to the top. We had a good time. It was more fun than work.

I spent my childhood in the town, which I knew before the electric streetlights arrived. I was very young when they installed electricity and the crowd and the anticipation of that event stuck in my memory. The transformer was in front of my house, so the townsfolk, old and young, and also the officials and priests gathered there for the big event. Something that I have not forgotten was a woman called Sandalia, who shouted: "This can't be! Miracle, miracle! Maybe it's something to do with witches or it's the devil's work and something bad will happen to us!"

Without internet, without television and without proper light to read, winter afternoons were very long. It was

necessary to invent something to pass the time, especially with seven restless creatures dancing around the house.

But this was not a problem for our grandparents, especially not for Grandfather Isidro, since he was particularly mischievous and playful. At least, we older grandsons and granddaughters remember it that way.

Pedro used to talk about a particular game that he liked a lot. It involved filling a basin with water and putting a coin in it. The basin was put on a table with the little ones and the parents around it. The object of the game was to get the coin out of the basin without using your hands. After deciding who would go first, they began to stick their heads in and try to get the coin out. If the first did not succeed, the turn went to the second and so on, until one of them eventually succeeded.

When the children gave a lot of trouble because they wanted to go out to play in the snow, they used to entertain them in this way: Their mother would call them to the first floor and, when they were all together, she would tell them that if they wanted to go out to play they could, but they should take care that their father doesn't find out. So they would creep down the stairs as slowly as possible, trying not to make any noise. When they were almost down, a dark shadow with a long stick and a terrible mask would appear, screaming and running towards them. Then, everyone would scramble back upstairs to protect themselves, hiding in their mother's skirts. And so over and over again. Our grandfather enjoyed inventing costumes and tricks.

Other times, Grandfather Isidro would gather the older girls and do maths practice with them as if it were a game. So, playing and laughing, they learned simple calculation tricks that helped them to get ahead in their studies. He did these same games years later with a granddaughter in Zaragoza.

One of the things they liked a lot was to sit around the fire place and tell scary tales, or recall ancient legends about Griegos. Especially when Grandpa Valentin came.

MARI.— Grandpa Valentin was very nice, he entertained the little ones well and he delighted the older ones by telling us stories and singing songs. I remember him very well. In the room with the stove, he would sit on a low chair, singing the songs of *La Verbena de La Paloma*—"Where are you going with a Manila thug?" and "A brunette and a blonde." Through our childhood fantasies, we imagined endless beautiful things, me at least.

He carried a *gayata* (stick) and used it to keep the beat and rhythm of the music. The stories he told were about witches and animals and, as we asked him to tell us more, he said "My repertoire is running out, I only have dirty jokes left". So, we insisted, "We will like them too", but he never would tell us a dirty story. He also told us legends, such as the one of the Night of San Juan, and of the Moorish princess in the Peñas del Cuarto (Griegos legend).

In short, they enjoyed life, with little money, working hard, spending little energy, taking only what they needed from the forest, cultivating and caring for the

land and animals, learning from generation to generation, children and parents together, in harmony with the rest of the family and their neighbours and nature. They were happy, as they collected their memories, and they would have continued there, as it was their home, their origin and their vision for the future.

Therefore, we, their grandchildren, want to remember their rich lives and experiences and their endearing passage through Griegos. That is why we vindicate their memory and that of our other relatives together with those other families and good people who suffered violence, had their rights and properties taken away, were uprooted from their place of origin and had to start again far away.

VI. YEARS LATER

One day, several years later, the first granddaughter was born and, while still a child, she asked Isidro:

"Grandad, what was I before I was born?"

The grandfather replied after a while, scratching his head:

"You were part of everything, of the water, of the air, of the land... of everything that is part of life."

"But Grandfather," the granddaughter pressed "why don't I remember anything from before I was born?"

Another good question, said Grandpa, exhaling rather forcibly. After a minute, he replied:

"Well, you don't remember it, but surely the Universe knows it."

Seeing her perplexed expression, he tried a different approach:

"Surely you look at the stars at night, right?"

"Yes, I like it very much", replied the granddaughter.

"Well," said Isidro, "some of them no longer exist in the present, but we see their footprint in the sky, which is their light. In the same way, we leave our footprints on the ground. Because everything that exists, or has existed, is recorded in the memory of the Universe and your memory is also in it."

She was not very convinced, but it opened a window to her imagination.

The girl started to play, a bit bored by the conversation, but she turned and asked him one last question:

"Grandfather, then, does the land have my memory and does it know what I was before I was born?"

"Phew!!! Of course," said Isidro sweating, "the land never forgets! And now, let's play."

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Ernesto´s wedding.

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Alicia's wedding.

.....

Ernesto's wedding feast.

.....

Julián's family, with a friend and her daughter from Madrid.

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Grandparents Isidro and María with María Jesús (Julián's wife), Carlos, Alberto (sons) and Alicia (niece) in the Plaza del Pilar.

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Julian with his wife and three children.

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Reme with her nephew Tomás and Sixta (Julián's mother-in-law).

BIBLIOGRAPHIC

AND

DOCUMENTARY NOTE

This story of some of the fundamental years in our family history draws from various sources. In the first place, and above all, the memories of our parents and grandparents, much of which has reached us orally. Although, in the cases of Julián and Mari Ibáñez Lazarán, we also have their written memoirs. Both, independently of each other, wrote a few pages about the family situation before, during and immediately after the Civil War. These autobiographical notes—about ten pages each—had been written for private use. In Julián's case, not even his children knew of their existence.

We have also consulted, with varying degrees of success, the archives of several documentary repositories, particularly Archivo Histórico Provincial de Teruel, Fundación Bernardo Aladrén, Archivo Histórico Nacional and Documentos y Archivos de Aragon DARA (Memoria Historica). Also extremely useful was the book by Eloy Cutanda Pérez *La represión franquista en la Sierra de Albarracín* (Tramacastilla [Teruel], Centro de Estudios de la Comunidad de Albarracín, 2017) which led us to the files of Vicente González Martínez, Baldomero e Isidro Ibáñez García, María Lazarán Garrido and Marina Soriano Bolós, Baldomero's wife. The records of all of them, as well as those of Alicia, Mari and Isabel Ibáñez Lazarán,

and the doctor Teófilo Almazán Gonzalo, can be found in the extensive database *Con Nombre & Apellidos. Desaparecidos y represaliados durante la Guerra Civil y la posguerra*, coord. Mercedes Sánchez, Zaragoza, Asociación por la Recuperación de la Memoria Histórica de Aragón, <connombreyapellidos.es> (Consulted: February 15, 2021).

It is also worth mentioning the article by María Dolores Saz Aguilar and Pedro Saz Pérez "Elecciones y II República en la Sierra de Albarracín" (*Rehalda*, 3 [2006], pp. 67-84), which has been very useful.

The information on the little road house of Carboneras de Guadazaón, as well as its photograph, have been obtained through Xosé Luis Martínez (2015-2021): Casillas de peones camineros de España, <casillasdepeonescamineros.es> (Consulted: January 21, 2021). The rest of the photographs come from the family archive.

Finally, Wendell Berry's book, *The Fire at the End of the World* has provided us with some background ideas that readers seasoned to his thinking will be able to appreciate properly.

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HUESCAS
ZARAGOZA

This book is a "little memory of the earth".
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The story of the Ibáñez Lazarán family, which begins in the cold, high lands of Griegos (Teruel), is a good example of the vicissitudes suffered by many in Spain during the first half of the 20th century, but especially by republican families after the coup of July 1936.

Through a plural voice—the writings of Mari and Julián, and the memories transmitted orally between the Ibáñez Lazarán generations, we enter the political events of the time and their dark consequences. We witness a postwar era of mistreatment, humiliation and prison, which runs in parallel with their efforts to rebuild family life far from their first home in Griegos. Reading these pages we also get a picture of what life was like for the Ibáñez Lazarán family in Griegos, with their economy so intimately connected to the care of their land, the manufacture of their own tools and machinery and the barter of goods and services. Continually building and rebuilding that crucial link between human and environment was, without doubt, a hard, but, at times, rewarding life. Their common effort in the face of adversity is the subject of this book.