

That half hour before the shooting and those murderous ten minutes of the killings have gone down in history as an unsurpassed example of serenity and courage of people under fire.

Bolivar Marguez, a cadet, fell mortally wounded, dragged himself towards the sidewalk and on the wall of a house wrote with his blood, "Long Live the Republic! Down with the assassins!"

Carmen Fernandez, 35 years old, saw the flag-bearer killed. As she tried to take the flag from him she received a volley of carbine fire. She fell, seriously wounded.

Dominga Cruz Becerril, a girl from Mayaguez, had already reached cover when she saw the flag on the pavement. She left her protected cover, ran to the flag, raised and waved it, and ran with it to the Pila Hospital. She was not wounded. Asked why she had done this she answered quietly: "Our Master has said the flag should always be flying." (The Master was Pedro Albizu Campos, the Nationalist leader.)

Genaro Lugo did not stay in the place after he saw the girl's murder. As he ran, he saw the police under Chief Perez Segarra's sub-machine squad firing on the terrified public.

Julio Conesa was the owner of the then only radio station in Ponce. He had parked his car at the Marina and Jobos street corner. He saw the police sub-machine detachment shooting against the people. He did not know the Rodriguez family at the time, but he recognized them in the photos. He had no doubts that he saw the police sub-machinegunning the father and two sons of this family.

The Rodriguez's were standing in front of a shoemaker's shop south of Jobos Street. Rafael, 18 years old, had just taken a couple of shots with his little camera. As he was preparing for another, the firing began. They fell on their faces for protection. There was a general discharge. He heard his brother say, "ay...!" and he saw his father immediately raising himself to protect his son. He saw his head was bleeding. He was fatally wounded. He died in a matter of seconds. His brother also. Rafael himself was wounded. Two policemen picked him up a quarter of an hour later. They threw him like a bag into a police wagon.

A young man was walking down Jobos Street. Suddenly he saw a policeman coming towards him. He was at least 50 feet away from the center of the shooting. As he read murder in the policeman's face and saw a gun in his hand, he cried out:-- "I am not a Nationalist, I am a National Guard. I am..." --until death silenced him forever.

He was really a National Guard. He had drilled that same morning at the El Castillo esplanade, some 100 meters from the place where he was killed. His name was Jose Delgado and he was 20 years old.

Such a socialite as Don Luis Sanchez Frasqueri (he is the father of Roberto Sanchez Vilella, who last November was named, through the polls, to the governorship) saw a man was going to be killed and yelled, "Don't kill him!" A police lieutenant, recognizing who he was, and not willing to have such a respectable witness against himself, stopped his men. The man was pushed unharmed into the police patrol. When Sr. Sanchez Frasqueri saw him again he was wrapped in bandages. He told him that in the police wagon first and at headquarters afterwards, he had been brutally beaten.

A fruit vendor, by the side of his car (Sanchez Frasqueri's car), was 75 yards away from the Nationalist Club. A policeman passing by saw him, turned back and opened his head with his riot club. This was also part of Sanchez Frasqueri's statement. At the same distance from the Club, on Luna Street, Sr. Sanchez Frasqueri saw a corpse. The body was filled with holes. In the man's agony he had tried to write with his blood the word valor, but he only lived to write V A L...

"When we began our investigation - wrote the Investigating Committee headed by Arthur Garfield Hays - we objected to naming our Committee The Committee For the Investigation of the Ponce Massacre. To refer to the Ponce tragedy, we used the Ponce Case, the riot, or any other phrase that should demonstrate our intention of dealing objectively with the facts. Now that we have heard all the proofs we agree that the people of Ponce had given this tragedy the only title it can possibly have: The Ponce Massacre."

APPEASEMENT

That night the Berlin radio had something to say. Nazi virulence was fed with flesh of martyrs. The trumpets resounded at all ends of the Axis. Mussolini's loudspeakers were taking revenge for all of America's hypocrisy on Ethiopia. Tokyo was giving the Asian peoples the truth about Franklin D. Roosevelt's humanitarianism. But, above all else, they were telling Latin America about the tenderness in the Good Neighbor's heart.

On March 27, 1937, the New York Post demanded:

"We expect Congress to make an independent investigation of the increasing unrest in Puerto Rico. The suppression of the Nationalist Party seems to become bloodier, and it is thought that it