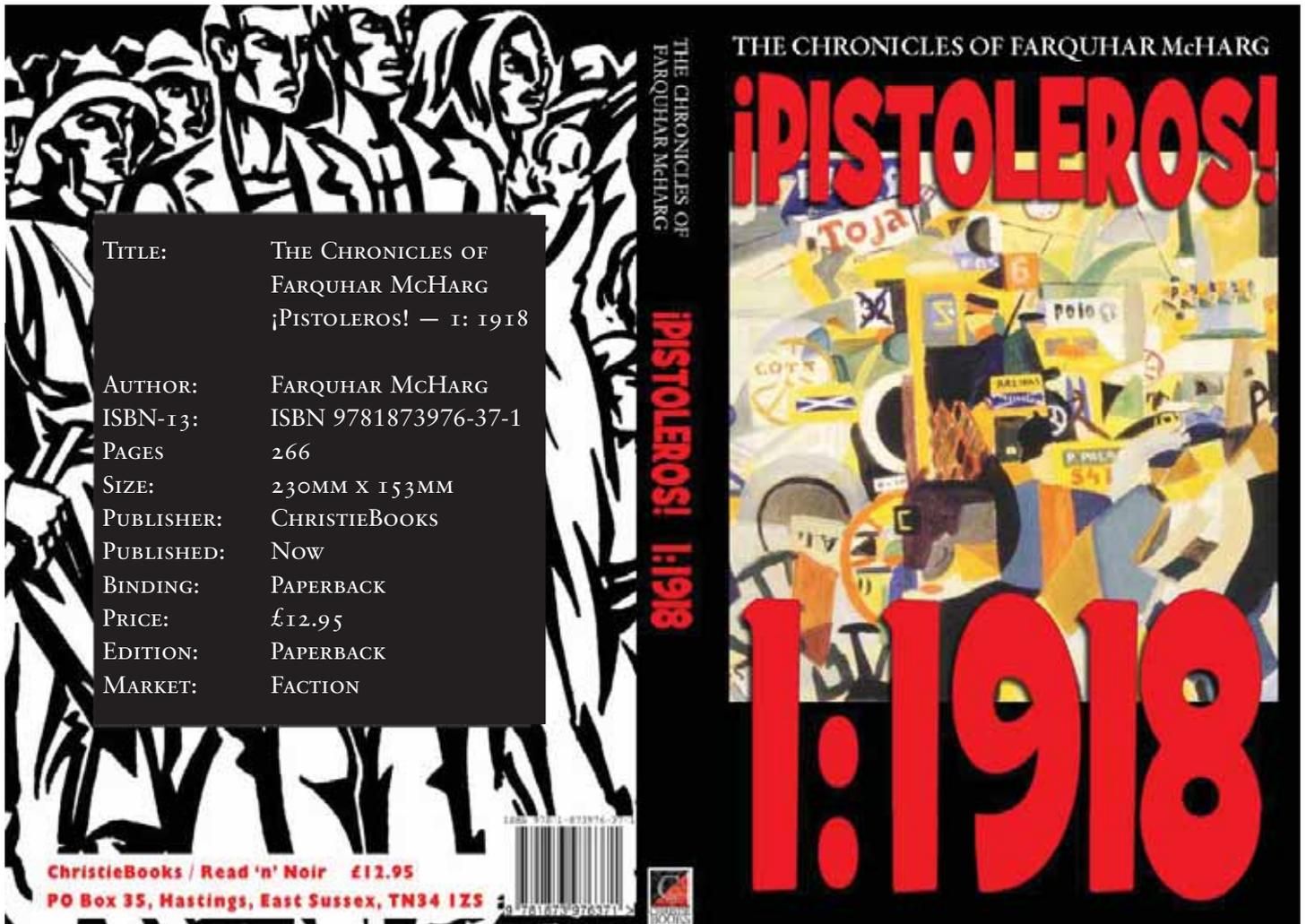




# New from ChristieBooks



**TITLE:** THE CHRONICLES OF FARQUHAR MCHARG ¡PISTOLEROS! — 1: 1918

**AUTHOR:** FARQUHAR MCHARG

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In 1976 Farquhar McHarg, a 76-year old Glaswegian, recounts the dramatic events of 1918, the first eight months of his life after the ship in which he is an apprentice engineer docks at Barcelona in the spring of 1918. Here he is saved from certain death by a life-changing encounter with the anarchist action groups. Plunged into the city's revolutionary milieu he finds himself working with the clandestine action service of the anarcho-sindicalist Confederación Nacional del Trabajo. To his surprise he finds that these men have joined forces with the foreign section of the British Secret Service Bureau to break up a network of Central Power spies, saboteurs and agents provocateurs who, working with Spain's employers' organisation, are using a strategy of tension to cow a discontented and potentially rebellious working class, and discredit and break the country's leading union by framing its activists for a campaign of murder and terror.

As Catalonia's Merchant City is transformed from gay and cosmopolitan Paris-sur-Mer to hunger- and gangster-plagued Chicagoby-the-Med, Farquhar's personal displacement shakes the foundations of his Presbyterian upbringing, inextricably intertwining his personal story with the dramatic events of the period. As Farquhar is drawn deeper into actions inimical to the cultural and ethical values he grew up with he is forced to rethink his core beliefs about ends and means in the struggle for justice – and survival, particularly with regard to the age-old question – is violence justifiable to challenge ruthless, tyrannical capitalism and to prevent, or at least ameliorate, suffering? This first part of Farquhar's odyssey through the political landscape of the early twentieth century begins eight months before the end of the great imperialist war. Europe's 'Captains and Kings' are preparing to depart the stage of history, leaving the fate of the industrialised world hanging on the edge of universal civil and class war. It is a time of turbulent social upheaval fuelled by four years of bloody slaughter and inspired by the apparent success of the Russian Revolution of October 1917, which unleashed – internationally – unprecedented utopian social and political expectations that capitalism was about to be overthrown – and replaced – by democratic organs of popular power – allowing the hitherto oppressed and impoverished to run society without the domination, interference or mediation of aristocrats, landed gentry, employers, priests, bourgeois facilitators and politicians, or bureaucrats.

Farquhar's *Chronicles* is one of the many micro-stories of history. It is a story of generous, naïve and reckless idealism, exemplary friendship and solidarity, of men and women – charismatic and ordinary – resisting attempts by the ruling elites to force them to comply with rules designed to limit and curtail their dreams of freedom, while selflessly risking their lives to resist tyranny and draconian laws that people may live as free individuals in a just and fair society. It is also a story of treachery and betrayal, and, occasionally, of redemption, but above all of hope, optimism and some of the ideas that set the world ablaze in the first part of the twentieth century.



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## What they've said so far...

"Having known Farquhar McHarg in his prime, and despaired of him ever putting down on paper his extraordinary experiences, I am delighted that he has finally done so. Glasgow's answer to Victor Serge has produced a document of remarkable value, so grippingly written that one might almost think it was a novel."

**Professor Paul Preston**, historian, Hispanist and Principe de Asturias Professor of Contemporary Spanish Studies, LSE

"Written with tremendous brio, this is a passionate and gripping tale of an idealist's 'coming of age'. McHarg's gripping narrative convincingly taps the rich historical seams of intrigue, protest and conflict of an age in which many of the streets of Barcelona, like those of many other European cities, became stained with blood due to the struggle between the defenders of the established order and those who dreamed of overthrowing it."

**Dr Chris Ealham**, historian, Hispanist and author of *Class, Culture and Conflict in Barcelona 1898-1937*

"The first volume of memoirs from Farquhar McHarg, is a highly charged narrative that fires from the hip in its scattergun treatment of revolutionary politics. It made me think of Marx's Herr Vogt meets Roddy Doyle's *A Star Called Henry*. Punchy as a bare-knuckle boxer, the writing in this vivid 'red noir' captures the craziness and complexity of the period, as well as exploring the big issues of commitment, faith and violence. In its heady brew of poetry and polemics and its dynamic depiction of the anarchist version of revolution it also does what it says in the title, and offers an explosive account that is as anarchic as the worldview it espouses. A book you'd want to carry in your bandolier."

**Professor Willy Maley**, Professor of Renaissance Studies, University of Glasgow

"A fact-packed history of anarchist struggle against the Spanish Catholic Church and state written by a Glaswegian whose revolutionary syndicalism is felt to be partly the inheritance of 'the Presbyterian and Covenanting tradition' in which he was brought up. As such this instructive and entertaining memoir is not only both a kind of retrospective 'prequel' to the story and ideas of Stuart Christie's excellent *Granny Made me an Anarchist*, but its Scottish antecedents also take in not only the anarchism of Guy Aldred, but the polemical and committed covenanting history of John Galt's great novel *Ringan Gilhaize*."

**Tom Leonard**, poet, professor and author of *outside the narrative. Poems 1965-2009*

"...A rare plunge into the dark whirlpool of politics, passion and intrigue that swirled around the docks, bars and tenements of Barcelona in 1918. B. Traven would be envious of McHarg's skill in re-creating the dangers and treachery of the times with such historical accuracy. The story is a fascinating *bildungsroman*; a young Scots seaman has hardly set foot on shore before he is caught up in the maelstrom. Chance encounters with charismatic characters of Barcelona's anarchist movement combined with tests of his resolve bring about the dawning of his own political consciousness and commitment. It is above all a richly-textured adventure story, refreshing in its humour and in its illuminating depiction of life in a period and place that will be unfamiliar to many readers of British fiction. *Pistoleros!* is a crack shot that rings out to remind us of times that were less bland."

**Pauline Melville**, writer, actress and author of *Shape-Shifter, The Ventriloquist's Tale, The Migration of Ghosts and Eating Air*

