

MANUELA DÍAZ CABEZAS "LA PARRILLERA"

LUCÍA: *"Me afeitaron la cabeza, me mataron a golpes y me pusieron de rodillas con un ladrillo en cada mano y otro en la cabeza. No podía decir dónde estaba mi marido"*

"They shaved my head, beat me to death and put me on my knees with a brick in each hand and another one on my head. I couldn't say where my husband was"

(MUSIC)

LUCÍA: Despite the generalised idea that the anti-Francoism struggle in Spain at the dawn of the end of the Spanish civil war was mainly starred by men, there were many women who played an indispensable role in the resistance against the followers of "*El caudillo*".

(MUSIC)

This is the story of Manuela Diaz Cabezas, known as "La Parrillera", a guerrilla fighter from Córdoba who became a milestone in the memory of the Spanish maquis.

(MUSIC)

VÍCTOR: This is the story of Manuela Diaz Cabezas, our protagonist was born on December 11 1920 in Villanueva de Córdoba. Manuela was the youngest of six siblings, she never attended school and dedicated herself to helping with the family's field work. Her parents, Ana Maria Cabezas and Francisco Diaz, were not committed to politics but they were class conscious and associated with communist militants. Over time, "La Parrillera" married Miguel López Cabezas, known as "El Parrillero", nicknamed after his grandfather's work, that consisted in making the grills with which the day labourers used to cook on the ground.

JUDIT: With the arrival of repression, the first to suffer was her husband Manuel, who was arrested, tortured and forced to work in labour battalions. When he was released, the man known as "Parrillero" fled to the mountains of Cordoba in 1939, where together with other well-known comrades such as



José Antonio Cepas (“El Lobito”) or Inocencio Bernabé (“Borríca”), he created the guerrilla group known as “Los Parrilleros”.

VÍCTOR: After the departure of her husband, Manuela was left to take care of the house, her children Juanito and Adela, her younger siblings and her mother. However, during this busy time, she never left aside her role in the anti-Francoist resistance. Instead, she lived a double life. She combined her work as a housekeeper and, on top of that, she joined her husband’s guerrilla group. As a member of Los Parrilleros, she was in charge of supplying the group with provisions such as food, clothes, supplies and other items her comrades needed to survive.

JUDIT: As important as this was, she was also in charge of providing the group with the most important tool of all: information. Undeniably, she became an essential member for the guerrilla’s survival in such a hostile environment as the mountains depended on her. Finally, in spite of her hard work, she was intercepted by the Guardia Civil in an alleged attempted robbery in order to supply her husband. Following this accusation, she was arrested and taken into custody, where she endured a brutal interrogation process in order to make her confess the whereabouts of her husband.

VÍCTOR: During this investigation, they shaved her hair off so that everyone could identify her as a collaborator of the Maquis and she was mercilessly tortured in many cruel ways: she was made to drink salt water, stand in uncomfortable positions for hours and hold up her arms in the air while carrying bricks and being beaten at the same time. Nevertheless, after everything she went through, she never said anything. She was aware that the life of her husband and the group depended on her silence. After eleven months of pre-trial detention in Pozoblanco and Córdoba, she was forced to clock in three times a day in the headquarters of the Guardia Civil, up to the definitive sentence.

JUDIT: These tortures, the stigmatisation, the total control of her movements and the fear of being sentenced (she was finally acquitted), led her and her brother Alfonso - who tried to escape from Franco's military service - to join Los Parrilleros on 20 March 1943 in order to survive. They travelled by train to Fuencaliente (Ciudad Real) and from there on foot through the Madrona mountain-range to La Solana del Chorrillo, leaving her two children in the village, in the care of her mother.

VÍCTOR: They lived on the move throughout the Sierra Morena, from Córdoba to Jaén. Life in the mountains was marked by persecution and the constant danger of being denounced or finding the Guardia Civil. Added to this were the precarious living conditions, as she herself said in an interview:



LUCÍA: *"We lived very badly, with a blanket on the floor and little else. We couldn't stop anywhere to avoid being discovered".*

VÍCTOR: During that time, unlike other guerrilla fighters, and because she was a woman, La Parrillera never carried weapons.

JUDIT: In the middle of 1943, Manuela became pregnant again. She had to give birth all alone, at the beginning of 1944, on the banks of a river. She had to abandon the baby to ensure its survival in the mountains. They left him at the Molina Fernández cortijo, however, the baby ended up handed over to the Guardia Civil, finally he died after one year.

VÍCTOR: On 27 February 1944, in an attempt to get food in the cortijo of El Tibio (Ciudad Real), her husband was shot by the Guardia Civil. According to the historian Francisco Moreno. *"Alfonso 'El Parrillero' entered the farmhouse and found the guards playing cards. He had no choice but to stop them and ordered them to raise their hands. The guards pretended to obey, but one of them threw Alfonso a stool, and the others took advantage to grab their rifles. The assailants fled, but on the esplanade of the farmhouse, full of snow and without natural defences, Miguel 'El Moraño' or 'Parrillero' was shot down by enemy fire, while the others, desperate, reached the thick forest".*

JUDIT: His corpse would be used as a warning to show it to all the women who had husbands in maquis groups in the mountains. Manuela, together with her brother Alfonso and El Lobito, continued to be part of the group, acting sporadically, now under the leadership of Inocencio "Borrica". Others, such as "Álvarez", "Coqueo" or Pablo González, decided to leave the group.

VÍCTOR: In December 1944, they were ambushed again by the Guardia Civil while trying to get provisions from the *cortijo* of Los Herraderos. They tried to escape, but the guards had surrounded them, so they had no option but to surrender. Only one of them managed to escape and ended up going into exile in France in 1945. Once arrested, María and the others were publicly exposed in the village while waiting for their trial.

JUDIT: The court-martial took place on December 16, 1945. They were accused of killing a local hunter during their activity as bandits. One of the members of the group, named José Antonio Cepas, was accused of participating in arrests of people who supported Franco and who were later killed, at the beginning of the Spanish Civil War. Manuela's brother, Alfonso, was charged of being a communist and a deserter from military service. And Maria of being a "concubine" and a member of a group of communist women in her native village of Villanueva de Córdoba. All three were sentenced to death. By that time, Manuela was only 25.



VÍCTOR: Finally, she got her sentence commuted to 30 years of prison, saving her from death. However, both men had a much worse future. Alfonso and José Antonio were both shot and killed on February 21, 1946, along with 12 other prisoners who were at the Carabanchel prison. Manuela would end up passing through different prisons of the regime such as Alcalá de Henares, Segovia, or Guadalajara. During this period her eldest son, Juanito, died of tuberculosis. In prison she learned to read and write, while trying to work and support her mother financially.

JUDIT: Finally, on August 5, 1961, at the age of 41, she was pardoned after spending 17 years in prison. After that, Manuela Díaz lived in her native village, Villanueva de Córdoba, until her death in 2006 at the age of 86. Her amazing story inspired the documentary *La Parrillera: una maquis por amor* (2009) directed by Miguel Ángel Entrenas with the participation of an association called **Foro para la Memoria Histórica**.

