

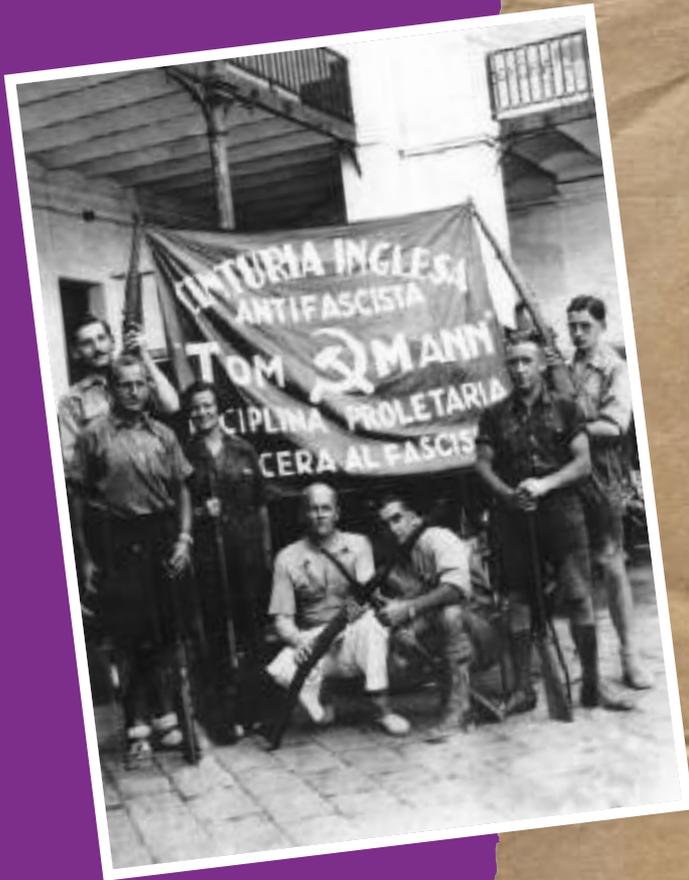


IBMT Newsletter

www.international-brigades.org.uk

Issue 39 / 2-2015

INTERNATIONAL BRIGADE MEMORIAL TRUST

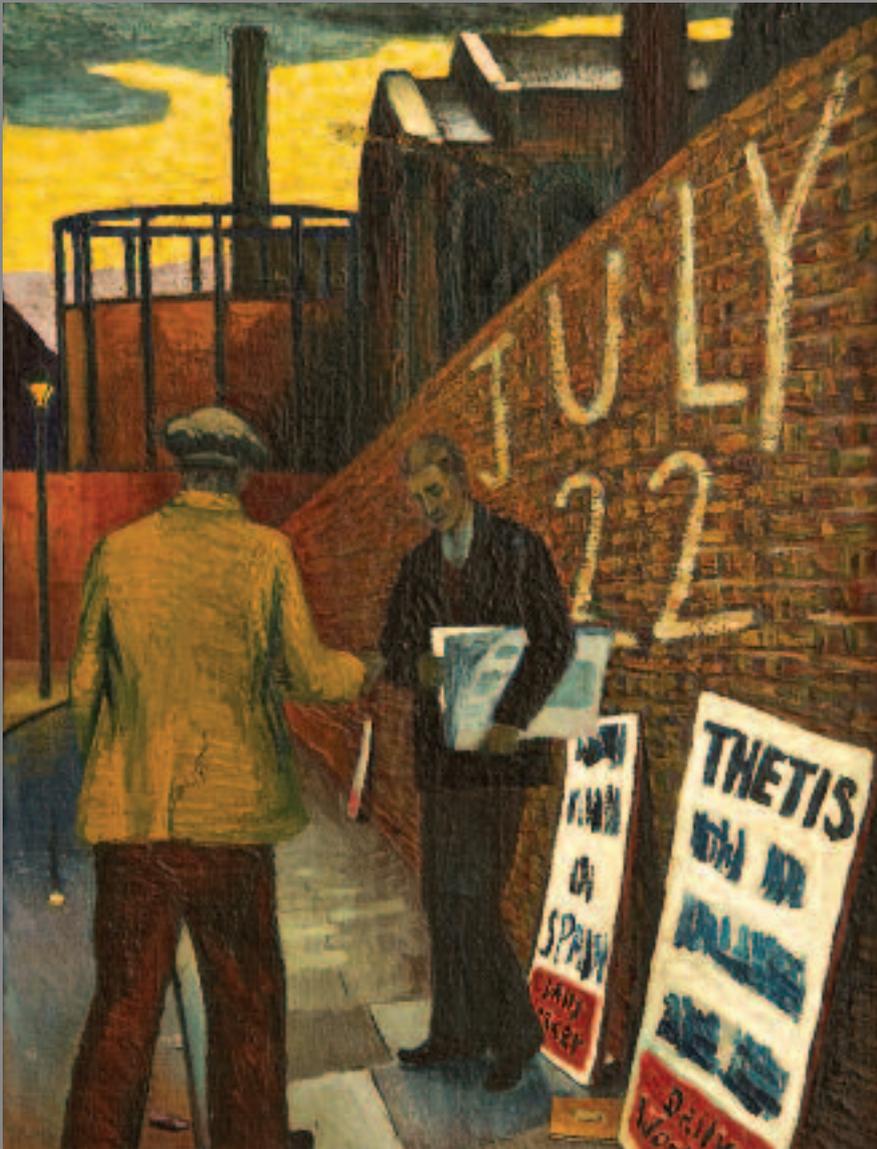


Ramona's story

From the Aragon front to activism and married life in London

Una formosa i valenta miliciana dis-
posada a anar al front

Clive Branson, Daily Worker (July 22), 1939, oil on canvas laid on board, 34.5 x 24.5cm, Collection of Rosa Branson © The Estate of Clive Branson



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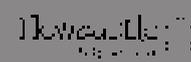
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Editor

Jim Jump

6 Stonells Road, London SW11 6HQ

020 7228 6504

secretary@international-brigades.org.uk

International Brigade Memorial Trust

www.international-brigades.org.uk

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Ana Parral

¡VIVA LA REPÚBLICA! Spain's Day of the Republic was marked on 14 April for the first time at the International Brigade memorial on London's South Bank. IBMT members were joined by Spaniards living in the capital to remember the Republic's values of democracy, social justice, equal rights and dignity for all. Flowers were laid for those who died in defence of the Republic or who suffered during Franco's repression. Among those who spoke at the gathering was Inés García Holgado, one of a group of lawyers from Buenos Aires who are seeking justice for the victims of Francoism through the Argentine courts. The Second Spanish Republic was proclaimed on 14 April 1931 amid much popular celebration.

Mapping the memorials

Worldwide online guide to sites where the International Brigades are remembered

Using Google Maps, the IBMT's friends in the Dutch International Brigade memorial association, Stichting Spanje 1936-1939, have made a start at identifying all memorials to the International Brigades in Europe and around the world.

All the information used in the map about memorials in Britain and Ireland has been provided by the IBMT (see www.international-brigades.org.uk/memorials).

The listings include coordinates for each memorial, although some of these may be approximate, says Rien Dijkstra, Secretary of Stichting Spanje 1936-1939. Also included is information about the opening date and dedication of each memorial, its inscription and approximate postal address.

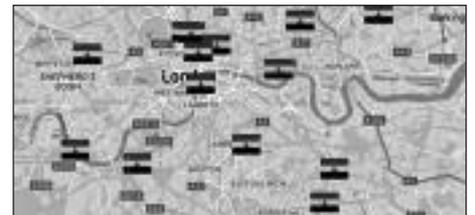
Sought

More information on the memorials in France and Italy in particular is still being sought, and Dijkstra hopes to update the map once the AABI International Brigade association in Madrid has completed its own survey of Spanish memorials.

He adds: "From my perspective the first goal should be to have a complete list of memorials. After this we could enhance things by finding or taking pictures of these memorials and on top of this we could enhance this database by



FLAGGED UP: Memorials in Europe (above) and in the London region (below).



providing downloadable PDF leaflets for the memorials. Most of them have quite interesting stories and backgrounds."

The maps can be accessed here: [www.google.com/maps/d/edit?mid=zMoy10BA-aSI.kCJL4guaG2hg] or via this shorter URL link: [<http://tinyurl.com/nejpnnf>]. Alternatively, go direct to the Stichting Spanje 1936-1939 website, where a link will appear on this page: [<http://spanje3639.org/kaarten>].

Plaque for Welsh captain and crew who rescued thousands



PRESENTATION: The delegation from Alicante present Cardiff Lord Mayor Margaret Jones (above) with a plaque to remember the crew of the *Stanbrook*. Holding the plaque with her is Pedro Olivares Martínez (centre) of Alicante's Civic Commission for the Recovery of Historical Memory and Capt Archibald Dickson's son, Arnold Dickson (right). The Spaniards also paid their respects at the International Brigade memorial in Cardiff's Cathays Park (below) and at the plaque in Castle Park, Bristol.



The "Welsh Schindler" of the Spanish Civil War, who rescued thousands of Spaniards from advancing fascist troops, was honoured in Cardiff during a weekend of commemorative activities on 11/12 April.

A group of Spaniards and expat Britons travelled from Alicante and joined IBMT members in paying tribute to Cardiff sea captain Archibald Dickson and his crew.

Dickson was the master of the *Stanbrook*, the last ship to leave the port of Alicante before it fell to General Franco's forces in March 1939 during the last days of the civil war.

On board were 2,638 civilian refugees, who were taken to safety in Algeria.

Thousands more remained in Alicante. They were rounded up by Franco's and Mussolini's troops and taken to the notorious Campo de los Almendros concentration camp. Many were executed or died in appalling conditions.

The 19-strong delegation from Alicante's Civic Commission for the Recovery of Historical Memory brought with them a memorial plaque for Dickson and his crew.

Ceremony

The plaque – in English, Spanish and Welsh – was presented to Cardiff City Council at a ceremony attended by the children of Capt Dickson, Arnold Dickson and Dorothy Richardson, and the great grandchildren of ship's engineer Henry Lillystone, David Lillystone and Sandra Robinson.

It is hoped that the plaque will be installed on the Cardiff waterfront by next year.

Accompanying the delegation from Alicante



MEMORIAL: Capt Archibald Dickson and the *Stanbrook* in Alicante harbour in March 1939.

were six members of Labour International Costa Blanca Branch, who arranged the visit to Wales in liaison with the IBMT and local trade unions.

Their IBMT hosts were Cardiff-based IBMT Membership Secretary Mary Greening and Bristol-based Trustee Duncan Longstaff.

Unveiled

In Alicante last year a memorial to Capt Dickson and the *Stanbrook* crew was unveiled on 30 March – almost exactly 75 years since the ship set sail from the port on 28 March 1939.

Tragically Dickson and his crew would lose their lives soon after their rescue of Spanish Republicans. The *Stanbrook* was torpedoed and sunk by a German U-boat in November 1939 in the early months of the Second World War.

The IBMT is campaigning for greater recognition for the role played by British seafarers such as Archibald Dickson in running the fascist blockade of Spanish Republican ports.

Some 29 British ships were wrecked or lost during the civil war as a result of fascist aerial bombardment and submarine attacks and dozens of seafarers were killed.

Alicante expats tour civil war sites

By Lorraine Hardy

On 26 February some 20 members of Labour International from the Costa Blanca met in Alicante and were joined by Rafael García, Luis Pesquera and Pedro Olivares Martínez of the Comisión Cívica de Alicante para la Recuperación de la Memoria Histórica (Alicante Civic Commission for the Recovery of Historical Memory). The CCARMH is reviving the memories of the hundreds of Alicante Republican supporters who suffered under Franco's fascist regime.

Labour International members were taken on a tour of Republican monuments erected by the CCARMH in and around the city. It started in the port at the monument to the British cargoship *Stanbrook* which, under Capt Archibald Dickson, rescued just under 3,000 people from Franco's advancing Italian and Moroccan troops in March 1939 and took them to Oran in Algeria.

Members of the CCARMH explained the significance of each of the monuments and locations. The tour included the Campo de los

Continued on page 6

Union assistance enables digitisation of historic film on ships and crews under fire in Spain

The two unions representing British seafarers have helped the IBMT preserve and digitise an important film in the British Film Institute's archives about British shipping during the Spanish Civil War.

Made in 1938 by the Progressive Film Institute (PFI), "Britain Expects" describes the dangers faced by crews and their ships as they defied the fascist blockade of Spanish Republican ports.

More than a dozen British ships had been



Opening title frame of the film "Britain Expects".

sunk and 35 seafarers killed by the time the film was made. The maritime unions and the shipowners with vessels sailing to Republican Spain were furious at the inaction of the British government, so commissioned the PFI to make this 16-minute film to show to public audiences.

For the digitisation of the film, Nautilus – the union representing ship's officers, and RMT, which organises ratings, each donated £300 towards the £775 cost of digitisation.

The IBMT plans to use the film to support efforts to raise a memorial to the seafarers who gave and risked their lives to continue trading with Republican Spain.

Though an important historical document, the film, which was directed by Charles Tomrley, proved ineffective and could only be shown at private meetings.

It was banned for public viewing by the British Board of Film Censors, with the unions suspecting that this was because of its criticism of the British government's policy of appeasement towards the fascist powers.

BBC remembers life of Margot Bennett



The life of Scottish-born International Brigade volunteer Margot Bennett (left) has been recalled in a BBC Radio 3 programme on women science fiction writers.

Broadcast on 5 April, "Memoirs of the Spacewomen" examined the works of four such

writers, including Bennett, who was known in Spain by her maiden name as Margot Miller.

She served in the autumn of 1936 with the British Medical Unit on the Aragon front, where she was injured in the legs by machine-gun fire in an incident recounted in the BBC radio documentary.

Margot was born in Lenzie, Dunbartonshire, on New Year's Day 1912 and died in London on 6 December 1980. Her best known book is "The



Long Way Back". It was published in 1954 and the plot centres on the African colonisation of Britain in the 27th century following a nuclear holocaust in 1984.

As well as writing several crime novels and thrillers,

she also contributed a story to the 1965 collection "Alfred Hitchcock Presents: Stories Not for the Nervous".

Bennett maintained her political activism in later life. During the 1960s she was a leading figure in the anti-war campaign group Committee of 100 along with her husband and fellow International Brigader Richard Bennett, whom she met in Spain.

The Committee of 100 used tactics of civil disobedience and direct action. According to the radio documentary, Margot and Richard were arrested on several occasions and the couple even kept radio-jamming equipment in the attic of their Hampstead home with which they tried to disrupt BBC broadcasts.

"Memoirs of the Spacewomen" (45 minutes), presented by Matthew Sweet and produced by Allegra McLroy, is available for download on BBC iPlayer.



WEBSITE: Until now, most researchers have had to visit Moscow to search the archives of the International Brigades.

Russians place International Brigade records online

The archives of the International Brigades that have been held in Moscow since the end of the Spanish Civil War are now accessible online. They contain tens of thousands of documents about the Brigades, including files on all the individual volunteers.

The website of the State Archive of Social and Political History of Russia (AEHSPR) is in Russian only, so non-Russian speakers will have to use browser translation facilities to navigate their way around a vast cache of documents and images.

The archive went online on 5 March and forms part of the much larger archive of the Comintern (Communist International).

The Comintern was founded in 1919 and disbanded by Stalin in 1943. During the Spanish Civil War it played a leading role in recruiting and organising the International Brigades via national communist parties around the world.

When the war in Spain ended the official records of the Military Commissariat of the International Brigades were shipped by Comintern officials to the USSR, where they were kept under wraps until the dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991. Even then, access to the records was not easy, with most researchers having to visit the AEHSPR archives in Moscow to search through the documents.

The IBMT has, however, held a digital copy of the British Battalion's records. This was purchased 12 years ago from New York University's Tamiment Library. The library acquired a microfilm copy of a substantial International Brigade archive during the Yeltsin era when Russian state archives were being sold off.

Go to the AEHSPR's International Brigade archive here: [<http://sovdoc.rusarchives.ru/#tematicchilds&rootId=94999>] or start at the home page: [<http://sovdoc.rusarchives.ru/#main>].

Stained glass window to honour Belfast volunteers

Belfast City Council has decided to commission a stained glass window for City Hall to commemorate the local volunteers in the Spanish Civil War.

A budget of £24,000 has been set aside for the project. The window will have a "prominent, ground floor, public location", says the council, with a target date for unveiling in October this year.

The initiative has received cross-party support, with councillors noting that

the volunteers who went to Spain were drawn both from the nationalist and unionist communities and were united in opposing fascism.

Forty-three Belfast men served in the International Brigades, of whom 12 were killed in Spain.

The original idea for the stained glass window came from the Belfast-based International Brigade Commemoration Committee. The IBCC first approached

councillors on the matter in 2013 and last year met representatives of all six parties on the city council.

The IBCC commented: "We think that it is fitting that such a joint community approach is being taken on this matter. We believe that the initiative for a stained glass window to commemorate the International Brigaders will be the first of its kind throughout the island of Ireland and the UK."

In brief



● Film-maker Lorena Cervera and Spanish Civil War battlefield historian Alan Warren have launched a crowdfunding appeal to raise money to make a documentary based on the book “The Last to Fall”, the story of **Ivor Hickman**

(pictured), an English International Brigader killed in the Battle of the Ebro in September 1938. The book was written by John L Wainwright and uses extracts from Ivor’s passionate love letters home to wife Juliet. Cervera and Warren also worked together on the 2014 documentary “War Is Beautiful” about American ambulance driver James Neugass. See: [www.indiegogo.com/projects/the-last-to-fall-documentary-film].

● The IBMT will be at the two major trade union festivals this summer, the **Durham Miners Gala** on 11 July and the **Tolpuddle Martyrs’ Festival** on 17-19 July. IBMT members are urged to keep a look-out for the Trust banner and to visit the IBMT stall at both events. To volunteer to help contact IBMT President Marlene Sidaway [marlenesidaway@hotmail.com] for the Durham event and IBMT Secretary Jim Jump for Tolpuddle [secretary@international-brigades.org.uk].

● The Spanish Friends of the International Brigades (AABI) is organising a tour of the **Córdoba front**, including Lopera, on 21-24 April 2016. Watch this space for more details.

● French Prime Minister Manuel Valls has apologised for the inhuman way that **Spanish Republican refugees** were treated in France. Hundreds of thousands fled across the border early in 1939 as Catalonia fell to Franco’s advancing forces. They were interned in camps on the sand dunes of Argelès-sur-Mer. Speaking on 20 February on the 76th anniversary of the “Retirada” (Retreat), Valls pointed out that he was a descendent of a family of Republican exiles who were forced into “camps of shame”. He added: “These people had fought for liberty but were imprisoned in barbed wire.”

● The **International Brigades Archaeology Project** (IBAP) will be in action again this year around Belchite in the first half of September. IBAP Coordinator Sal Garfi writes in to say: “If anyone would like to take part in this exciting archaeological project—archaeological experience is not necessary—visit the project website at: [https://sites.google.com/site/internationalbrigadesproject]. He adds: “Our 2014 season was very successful and everyone enjoyed themselves tremendously. We hope that 2015 will be even better.”

Ambitious plans by organisers of Aberdeen AGM

IBMT supporters in Aberdeen are planning to use the Trust’s forthcoming Annual General Meeting in the city as an opportunity to remind Aberdonians of the big impact that the Spanish Civil War had on their community.

There are even hopes that the flag of the Spanish Republic will be flown from the city’s Town House over the AGM weekend.

Nineteen local men made the 1,600-mile journey to Spain. Five of them were killed while fighting in the International Brigades.

There was also much activity in support of the Spanish Republic’s war effort on the part of activists in the Aberdeen labour movement.

Programme

A weekend programme of events is being arranged to tie in with the IBMT’s AGM, which will be held during the afternoon of Saturday 17 October in the city’s Town House. This will also be the venue for a civic reception on the Friday evening.

For the Saturday morning there are plans to unveil a new plaque in Castlegate and to rededicate the International Brigade roll of honour in the Music Hall. A new plaque to Brigadier John Londragan outside the Aberdeen TUC office is also being proposed.

There will also be a social evening of music and poetry on Saturday.

On Sunday the Kirk of St Nicholas will host a commemoration of the lives of the volunteers, followed by a march to Castlegate with International Brigade and union banners led by a pipe band.

The organisation of the weekend is being coordinated by a team led by Unite Regional Industrial Officer Tommy Campbell. Others involved include Labour councillor Neil Cooney, whose uncle Bob Cooney fought in Spain, and



ABERDONIANS: From left, Archie Dewar, Bob Cooney and Tom Davidson in Spain. Dewar and Davidson were killed in battle, and the flag in which their bodies were wrapped was sent back to Aberdeen.

Kevin Buyers, who hosts the XV International Brigade in Spain website at [http://internationalbrigadesinspain.weebly.com].

Among the five local men killed in Spain were Archie Dewar and Tom Davidson. Their bodies were wrapped in the flag of the Spanish Republic before being buried in Spain.

Still with traces of the men’s blood on it, the flag was sent back to Aberdeen. But it was overlooked until 1985 when it was rediscovered and put on display at the TUC office on Adelphi Lane.

Says Tommy Campbell: “We’re in discussions about getting a replica flag made and hopefully the city council will fly it over the Town House over the weekend.”

Reprint

There are also plans to update and reprint a booklet published by the Aberdeen TUC about the Spanish Civil War and Neil Cooney’s booklet on Bob Cooney, as well as a little-known anti-fascist history booklet “Fighting Fascism in Aberdeen”.

Even more ambitiously, the organisers are hoping to encourage local schools to find out more about the International Brigades and their part in fighting fascism, perhaps through poetry and essay competitions.

See the listing for the Aberdeen AGM on page 22 for details of a special accommodation deal for IBMT members.

Alicante expats visit Republican memorials and sites

From page 4

Almendros prison camp and the Central Market, where 315 people died in a Francoist bombing raid in May 1938.

The route passed by the former prison where poet Miguel Hernández died and we visited the monuments at the mass grave of Francoist repression in Alicante cemetery.

The final trip was to the site of the airfield, near Monóvar, from where Republican Prime Minister Juan Negrín and Dolores Ibárruri (La Pasionaria) left Spain in 1939 with the Republic’s defeat. José Ramón Valero, a professor from Alicante University, explained the history of significant buildings.

Malcolm Hardy, Chair of Labour International Costa Blanca, said: “This was a moving experi-

ence, highlighting the dreadful consequences of fascist movements, now on the rise in Europe again, trampling on democracy. The CCARMH are to be congratulated for not allowing the awful crimes committed during the period of the civil war to be forgotten, which is of great value to the descendants of the victims of the repression.”

It was following their success in getting several memorials erected in Alicante that the CCARMH approached Labour International to assist them in presenting a memorial in the city of Cardiff to the heroism of Cardiff-born Capt Dickson and his crew (see story on page 4).

Lorraine Hardy is Secretary of the Labour International Coordinating Committee. See photo in Secretarial Notes: page 9.

Guernica: art and atrocity laid bare

At the IBMT's Len Crome Memorial Conference

By Pauline Fraser

A record audience of more than 180 people attended the 2015 Len Crome Memorial Conference, gaining new insights into many aspects of Guernica, from the terror bombing of the little Basque town to Picasso's famous painting of the same name.

Chaired by Professor Paul Preston, the all-day conference on 7 March at the Manchester Conference Centre, titled "Guernica: the destruction of a town and the creation of a masterpiece", kicked off with a description of George Steer's role in telling the world about the bombing.

Nick Rankin, author of "Telegram from Guernica", gave a gripping account of the central part played by *The Times* journalist and the light that he shone on the terror rained down on Guernica on Monday 26 April 1937 by Franco's German and Italian allies.

It was due to Steer's audacity and persistence that the world learnt of this war crime against a defenceless civilian population.

Nick was followed by art historian Gijs Van Hensbergen, whose presentation, part-sleuth

"This crime against humanity was compounded by years of 'negationism' – denial by Franco and his supporters that it ever happened – followed by 'reductionism', where attempts continued to be made to minimise the extent of destruction."

and part-archaeologist, peeled away the layers of meaning from Picasso's masterpiece. We learnt, for example, that the artist had been commissioned to paint a picture to fit a specific "slot" at the international exhibition in Paris, and was looking for a subject when the town of Guernica was bombed.

Replica

A textile part-replica of Picasso's "Guernica", designed by a Brighton-based group of



Photos: Marshall Mateer

LECTURING: Art historian Gijs Van Hensbergen (right) speaks in front of an appreciative audience (above) at the IBMT's annual Len Crome Memorial Conference in Manchester on 7 March. The other three main speakers were (bottom, from left) author Nick Rankin, historian Xabier Irujo and Manuel Moreno, President of the Basque Children of 37 Association UK.



women artists and anti-fascist activists, but sewn by people throughout Britain and also in India, was displayed in front of the speakers' table throughout the day. Maude Casey and a co-worker explained the tapestry's modern relevance during a lunchtime session.

Dr Xabier Irujo, of the University of Nevada, afterwards told us in meticulous detail how the German and Italian high command in Spain had agreed tactics for the terror bombing of Guernica. The town was the "required size" for the number of aircraft they had available, a high density of civilians would be in Guernica for market day, and it was an "open town", with no anti-aircraft batteries.

Irujo exposed the sheer calculating evil behind the premeditated slaughter, which killed more than 2,000 civilians. This crime against humanity was compounded by years of "negationism" – denial by Franco and his supporters that it ever happened – followed by "reductionism", where attempts continued to

be made to minimise the extent of destruction.

Our final speaker was IBMT member Manuel Moreno, whose mother came from the Basque Country and whose father served in the Spanish Republican and Free French armies before settling in London. It must have been painful for Manuel to share the story of the killing of his uncles at the hands of the Franco regime, and the audience listened respectfully to his horrifying account.

Organising team

The day ended with well deserved thanks going to the organising team behind the success of the conference, which was led by Dolores Long, IBMT Chair, Trustees Hilary Jones and Chris Hall and Treasurer Charles Jepson.

The annual conference is held in memory of Dr Len Crome, a GP from Blackburn who went to Spain in December 1936 and became the chief medical officer of the International Brigades.



SIGNPOSTED: Protesters with a new name for Madrid's Plaza Margaret Thatcher.

IBMT members join plaza renaming call in Madrid

IBMT supporters joined in a protest against the naming of a Madrid square as Plaza Margaret Thatcher, suggesting instead that it should be named after International Brigader Jack Jones.

There have been frequent demonstrations against the controversial naming of the square in 2012 after the former British Prime Minister. This latest protest, held on 20 February, was swelled by IBMT members who were in the Spanish capital for the annual Battle of Jarama commemoration.

Backing the name-change demand, IBMT Secretary Jim Jump said: "It's very insensitive of the Madrid authorities to name a square after someone who was an admirer of General Pinochet."

He went on "Pinochet modelled himself on Spanish dictator General Franco. Both came to



Oscar Rodriguez

THROUGH THE OLIVE GROVES: The annual Battle of Jarama commemoration weekend in Madrid on 19-22 February attracted hundreds of visitors from around Spain and the rest of Europe, with the largest foreign contingents coming from Britain and Ireland. Some 600 supporters went on the Saturday morning walk (above) across the battlefield characterised by its olive groves.

The weekend also saw the first public outing for a replica "Scottish Contingent" banner. It is seen here at the commemoration by the memorial in Tarancón to the Scottish dead of the Battle of Jarama (bottom right of picture).

power following a military coup and were responsible for the murder, torture and execution of tens of thousands of their own citizens.

"The Madrid authorities should remember the example of the International Brigades in fighting fascism rather than someone who was a friend of military dictators."

Jack Jones, a former Liverpool docker, was the Life President of the IBMT when he died, aged 96, in 2009. Following service in the British Battalion in Spain, he became a full-time officer of the Transport & General Workers' Union (now Unite) and was its General Secretary from 1968-78. He later led the National Pensioners Convention.



Thanked at last: men who said 'Nae pasaran' to a dictator

Chile has finally honoured Scottish Rolls Royce workers who in the 1970s stood up to brutal dictator Augusto Pinochet in a boycott campaign that was supported at the time by International Brigade veterans in Scotland.

Union members at the Rolls Royce factory in East Kilbride refused to repair jet engines for the Chilean airforce following General Pinochet's violent overthrow in 1973 of the elected socialist government of Salvador Allende.

Forty years later, at a ceremony in Glasgow in March this year, Bob Fulton, John Keenan and Robert Sommerville, three union shop stewards who led the boycott, were presented with the Order of Bernardo O'Higgins medal by the Chilean ambassador.

Their action grounded part of the Chilean airforce, which had bombed

President Allende's presidential palace in the coup. The four engines remained "blacked" until they were removed from the factory with a police escort in August 1978 following a court order allowing them to be returned to Chile.

Throughout the stand-off the union-led boycott was strongly backed by former International Brigaders, who drew comparisons between the Chilean and Spanish dictatorships and the political prisoners held in both countries.

Pinochet was an admirer of General Franco and was one of only two heads of state to attend the Spanish dictator's funeral in 1975.

"Nae Pasaran", a 2014 documentary by Felipe Bustos about the action taken by the Rolls Royce workers, was screened at the Edinburgh International Film Festival last year.



SOLIDARITY: International Brigaders show support for the Pinochet boycott in 1974. They include Gary McCartney (first right) Tom Murray (right, black beret) Donald Renton (in front of Tom, dark jacket), Tommy Bloomfield (looking over Donald's shoulder) Tom Clarke (centre with glasses) and Jimmy Maley (partially hidden, third from left).



The International Brigade Memorial Trust keeps alive the memory and spirit of the men and women who volunteered to defend democracy and fight fascism in Spain from 1936 to 1939

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Secretary

Jim Jump

6 Stonells Road, London SW11 6HQ

020 7228 6504

secretary@international-brigades.org.uk

President

Marlene Sidaway

marlenesidaway@hotmail.com

Chair

Dolores Long

doloreslong@fastmail.fm

Treasurer

Charles Jepson

clarioncc@yahoo.co.uk

Ireland Secretary

Manus O’Riordan

mmanusoriordan@gmail.com

Membership Secretary

Mary Greening

memsec@international-brigades.org.uk

Education Officer

Richard Thorpe

thorpe.ortiz@btinternet.com

Merchandise Officer

Chris Hall

christoff_hall@yahoo.co.uk

Other Executive Committee members

Mike Arnott, Richard Baxell, Pauline Fraser,

Hilary Jones, Duncan Longstaff,

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SECRETARIAL NOTES

IBMT Secretary **JIM JUMP** writes

No equivalence between fascism and communism of the volunteers

This May marks the 70th anniversary of the defeat of Nazism in the Second World War. Many International Brigaders and Spanish Republicans played a part in that great victory, whether as members of the Allied armed forces or as resistance fighters and partisans in Nazi-occupied Europe.

The Second World War saw the death of some 60 million people and unspeakable crimes against humanity. Its causes lay in the militarism of Europe’s fascist dictators and their poisonous ideology of political violence and racial superiority. The danger that fascism posed had

“It is an insult – and a travesty of history – to compare people with these values to those who systematically exterminated millions.”

been obvious to many people, not least the volunteers who went to Spain. It took longer for the political elites in Britain and elsewhere to realise it was a threat to their interests as well.

Sadly today many of these historical truths are being distorted. In some countries of Eastern Europe and former parts of the Soviet Union, Nazi collaborators are now publicly honoured as “nationalists” and “freedom fighters”. Monuments to the International Brigades have been removed, along with those to the Red Army. Fascist insignia are openly

displayed in street parades and demonstrations and, in the case of Ukraine, worn by pro-Western military units fighting separatist rebels.

In that same spirit of historical revisionism, in 2009 the European Parliament carried a resolution on “conscience and totalitarianism” condemning totalitarian crimes and calling for the recognition of communism, Nazism and fascism as “a shared legacy”.

Such attempts to equate communism with fascism must be rejected. Stalin’s Soviet Union committed terrible crimes against its own people – as indeed have many Western powers and allies against those who stand in the way of their ambitions. But the Red Army must take most of the credit for destroying the Nazi war machine. And communists had a proud role in the vanguard of the resistance movements that shared that victory.

Most International Brigade volunteers were communists. What’s clear from what they said and wrote is that they wanted a world free of fascism, anti-Semitism, social injustice and oppression. It is an insult – and a travesty of history – to compare people with these values to those who systematically exterminated millions of Jews, along with Roma and other ethnic and religious groups, and mass-murdered gays, the disabled, communists, trade unionists and Soviet prisoners of war.

One of the tasks of the IBMT must surely be to challenge any such pernicious rewriting of history. We owe this to the anti-fascist volunteers who went to Spain from these islands and the 526 of them who in doing so gave their lives.

Stan in good care

It’s good to know that our last surviving International Brigade volunteer from Britain, Stan Hilton, is in fine physical health and being well looked after in a nursing home in Ocean Grove, Victoria, Australia.

Stan, who turned 97 last December, is a former merchant seaman from Newhaven,

Continued overleaf

LIGHTS: Congratulations must go to the Labour International Costa Blanca Branch. The Labour-supporting expats initiated and organised the visit to Cardiff in April by members of Alicante’s historical memory association to pay tribute to the crew of the *Stanbrook* in rescuing so many Spanish Republicans (see page 4). It’s good to see them taking such an interest in modern Spanish history, notably the Spanish Civil War and aftermath. Several indeed are IBMT members. Here they are outside Alicante’s Central Market at the memorial to the victims of a Francoist bombing raid on 25 May 1938. Red lights come on at 12.10pm each day to mark the 315 deaths. Lorraine Hardy describes their tour of civil war sites on page 4.





The IBMT-supported “Conscience and Conflict” exhibition at Chichester’s Pallant House Gallery was a great success. See “Proud to have been a sponsor”.

From previous page

Sussex, who served in the British Battalion in Spain in 1937/38. He emigrated to Australia with his family in the 1960s.

Stan’s family tell us that he gets frequent visits from them and is being well looked after by caring staff. Son Gordon Hilton says: “As I look back on his life I can truthfully say that his experiences in Spain were without doubt the most important in his life.”

After the Spanish Civil War Stan served in the merchant navy during the Second World War. “He saw all manner of horrors but in spite of all this he managed to keep a sense of humour and above all a sense of adventure – you could literally write an adventure novel about him,” Gordon adds.

Proud to have been a sponsor

The “Conscience and Conflict: British Artists and the Spanish Civil War” exhibition at Chichester’s Pallant House Gallery was a phenomenal success. It culminated in an “IBMT Day” on 6 February, the exhibition’s penultimate day, when there were packed talks given by the gallery’s Artistic Director, Simon Martin, and historian and IBMT Trustee Richard Baxell.

During the exhibition the local cinema had to put on an extra screening of “The Guernica Children” and there was a full house for “Land and Freedom”. The same was true of the other talks and associated events. We hear that one woman became very emotional after seeing “Land and Freedom”, as her first boyfriend had been killed fighting in Spain.

Many of the visitors came from Spain, including some who made the journey especially to see the exhibition. There was even a visit from the British ambassador in Madrid.

The IBMT is proud to have been one of the

official sponsors of the “Conscience and Conflict” exhibition. If you haven’t already seen it, try to get to the Laing Art Gallery in Newcastle, where it is on show until 7 June.

See Letters on page 17, What’s On listings on page 21 and the inside front cover advert.

Mick’s mural on the move

As a postscript to my report in this column in our last issue (1-2015), there is news about another mural created by our former Trustee and artist Mick Jones (1944-2012), who was also the son of legendary International Brigade veteran and trade union leader Jack Jones.

The mural in question was painted for the Eastbourne Centre in Sussex, which is owned



Part of the Mick Jones mural that has been taken down from Unite’s Eastbourne Centre.

by Unite the Union (formerly the Transport & General Workers’ Union that was led by Jack). Thankfully, however, this time the news isn’t as bleak as that from the former Merseyside Trade Union Community and Unemployed Resource Centre, where the mural will be lost forever.

Created by Mick along with Simon Barber and Christopher Robinson of the Art Workers’ Cooperative and unveiled in 1976, the Eastbourne mural was removed in January from the centre’s restaurant area. It is now in secure storage and the plan is to relocate it to a new training and education centre that Unite hopes to open in the near future.

The mural incorporates many labour movement stories and themes, and references the Spanish Civil War with graffiti saying “Solidarity with Spain”.

IBMT Film Coordinator Marshall Mateer videoed the mural when the Trust held its Annual General Meeting in Eastbourne in 2012 and created this short tribute to Mick based on it: [www.flickr.com/photos/ibmt/8412041198].

Republicans who liberated Paris

From Paris comes welcome news that the gardens of the city’s town hall – the Hôtel de Ville – have been named after the Spanish Republican company of the Free French Army that spearheaded the liberation of the French capital from the Nazis.

“La Nueve”, as the Spanish unit was called, led the forces commanded by General Leclerc that entered the city on 24 August 1944. Leclerc gave the Spaniards, who were under the command of Lieutenant Amado Granel, permission to drape the Spanish Republican flag on their armoured vehicles, which also carried the names of battles of the Spanish Civil War such as Brunete and Guadalajara.

“La Nueve” later took part in the famous victory parade along the Champs-Élysées with General de Gaulle.

The decision to name the city hall’s gardens as the Jardin des Combattants de la Nueve was taken by Anne Hidalgo, the Socialist mayor of Paris, who is the grand-daughter of a Spanish Republican refugee in France.

Many eyebrows were raised, however, by her invitation to Spain’s king and queen, Philip VI and Letizia, to attend a naming ceremony on 25 March. On social media some Republican supporters expressed outrage over the involvement of the monarchs. But we must hope that this affair will have had the effect of making more Spaniards – and French people – aware of the proud and prominent role that Spanish Republican exiles had in the French Resistance and liberation of France from Nazi occupation in the Second World War.

The Jardin des Combattants de la Nueve (Place de l’Hôtel de Ville, 75004 Paris) is open to the public from 9am to sunset on Saturdays, Sundays and public holidays.

Jim Jump

secretary@international-brigades.org.uk



All change in 2015?

JUSTIN BYRNE looks forward to elections in Spain that will be a test both for the traditional two-party system and for new parties for ‘indignant’ voters.

Regional elections in Andalusia on 28 March marked the start of an almost full round of elections in Spain this year. Voters all over the country will go to the ballot box to elect local councils on 24 May, when the regional government will also be up for grabs in 13 of Spain’s 17 autonomous communities.

Most importantly, a general election is to be held by November, when voters will have the chance, and polls suggest the inclination, to smash the two-party system that has operated in Spain since the return to democracy in the late 1970s. This represents a major threat both to the two traditional parties of government, the Socialists (PSOE) and the Popular Party (PP), as well as to the floundering minority communist-led coalition, Izquierda Unida (IU).

The strongest and better known of the newcomers is Podemos, which has already shaken the foundations of Spanish politics to the core. Tracing its roots back to *los indignados* (the indignant people) movement of 2011, the party

“Podemos appeals to the ‘people’ to mobilise against ‘the caste’, the nebulous term used to refer to the political and economic elites of both right and left.”

was formed to fight the May 2014 European elections, when it won just under 8 per cent of the vote and five seats. Since then it has consolidated itself as the principal electoral channel for popular discontent with the dramatic effects of the economic crisis: austerity, corruption and the lack of prospects for so many Spaniards, especially the young.

In Andalusia in March, when the PSOE won

enough seats to renew a minority government and IU’s vote slipped to just 7 per cent, Podemos took 15 per cent of the vote, a result considered disappointing but which nonetheless gave it 15 of the 109 seats in the regional parliament. It is running at 20-24 per cent in recent national opinion polls, not far behind, and sometimes ahead of, the PP and the PSOE.

Podemos is a fluid, diverse and complex phenomenon. While its founders and the vast majority of activists are leftists, they eschew the traditional language, identities and structures of the old left in favour of a consciously new style of populist politics. Podemos appeals to the “people” to mobilise against “the caste”, the nebulous term used to refer to the political and economic elites of both right and left.

For Podemos now is the time not just to protest, but to construct a new “social majority” to overthrow the “regime of 78”, currently tottering under the weight of systemic corruption, the economic crisis, and the “caste’s” slavish and self-interested commitment to Troika-imposed austerity. And this can only be done by winning elections and gaining power, something the old left looks conspicuously incapable of achieving.

The party’s electoral pragmatism may help explain why its diagnosis and strategy are rather clearer than its programme. The promise of radical change in political practice and policies has evolved into an ill-defined social-democratic, anti-austerity and anti-privatisation platform, based on defence of the public sector and sphere, sustainability, democratic renewal and transparency. Attempting to appeal to the broadest possible spectrum of the electorate, Podemos has seemed in no rush to set out concrete policies that might alienate any potential support.

The task is made harder by the internal complexity of the movement. Despite strong, even hyper leadership exercised from the top, and above all by the charismatic young political scientist and activist Pablo Iglesias and his inner circle, Podemos has a strong culture of internal democracy and participation, which has inevitably slowed things down. Both dynamics have been at work here in Madrid. In the regional elections Podemos is standing under its own name, presenting a consensus list of candidates drawn up in rather “old school” negotiations and manoeuvring between different groups and organisations, but elected in primaries. The candidates include Trotskyists, recent defectors from the IU, as well as Podemos party loyalists.

In the local elections it is running in a broader coalition called Ahora Madrid (Madrid Now), which includes candidates elected in primaries from an even wider spectrum of the left, social movements and independents, not all of whom share the leadership’s populist, catch-all vision and strategy. No-one says it is going to be easy.

Podemos now faces another competitor for the indignant vote, this time from the centre right. Founded in 2006 in Catalonia as an anti-nationalist party, Ciudadanos (Citizens) came from nowhere to take over 9 per cent of the

“As in Andalusia, the promised change may prove rather less profound, or radical, than many are hoping for or expecting.”

vote in the Andalusian elections, helping to send the PP’s vote down from 2012’s 40 per cent to 26 per cent. Led by young, clean-cut lawyer Alberto Rivera and others of his ilk, Ciudadanos presents itself as “the feasible and sensible alternative to transform Spain”, offering a liberal-sounding programme of democratic and economic regeneration, reordering of the State of the Autonomies to cap the powers of regional governments, and the defence of citizens’ individual and collective rights. Polls suggest it might take as much as 15-20 per cent of the vote nationally.

While it is too early to predict any results, the various elections this year will almost certainly confirm the demise of two-party politics in Spain and the consolidation of these two newcomers at all levels and in many places.

This means that politics is going to become more plural and much more complicated, with both winning and losing parties forced to define their positions in negotiations for coalitions or minority governments. This can surely only be for the good, even if, as in Andalusia, the promised change may prove rather less profound, or radical, than many are hoping for or expecting.

Justin Byrne is a historian and teacher in Madrid. He is active in the AABI Spanish Friends of the International Brigades: www.brigadasinternacionales.org.

Victor Pey: a new home in Chile – and a debt repayed

GIDEON LONG meets a refugee from the Spanish Civil War who, with a little help from Pablo Neruda, fled to South America to start a new life.

More than 75 years on, Victor Pey clearly remembers his escape across the Pyrenees at the end of the Spanish Civil War. Pey was a young anarchist from Barcelona who spent most of the war manufacturing arms for the Republican cause. But when Barcelona fell to Franco's forces in January 1939, Pey, along with his brother and thousands of others, fled the city for the French border.

"There was a mass exodus," he recalls. "We managed to get out on the back of a cargo truck and we got to a little village called Torelló. And there news reached us that Franco's troops were still advancing. All the plans we had of organising some kind of resistance ended there, and our only aim was to get to France."

But the French had closed the border crossings and thousands of starving Spaniards were gathering at the frontier, waiting to be



PEY: Repaid his debt to Pablo Neruda when he hid the communist poet in his Santiago apartment.

allowed in. With no solution in sight, Victor and his brother chose to walk across the mountains. "You have to remember that this was January, the middle of winter," he says. "We were in the clothes we were standing in because we'd left home hoping we'd be back within a few days. We walked for two days and two nights."

On the first night, the brothers stumbled across a wooden hut, temporary home to some Italian anarchists. "They had these two huge dogs and we spent the night curled up beside them to keep warm. We spent the second night in the mountains, in a kind of cave. Then we got to a ridge and we saw lights below us and we thought 'that must be France'."

When they descended they were arrested by the French police and shunted through a series of holding centres, finally ending up in a camp

in Perpignan. "We'd crossed the Pyrenees with just two kilos of sugar cubes that we found in an abandoned house," he says. "When we got to Perpignan they gave us a plate of hot spaghetti that was like manna from heaven."

After weeks in detention Victor was released and made his way to Paris, where the threat of war with Nazi Germany was growing. He read in a French newspaper that the Chilean poet and diplomat Pablo Neruda was in France on a mission to send Spanish refugees to safety in Chile. So, Victor went to the Chilean consulate and asked to speak to Neruda in person. "He asked me my name, my surname, how many people were in my family, our professions, and in a little notebook he wrote down my address in France, and he told me they were preparing a ship, the *Winnipeg*, to leave from Bordeaux."

Sailed for Chile

On 4 August 1939, Victor and his relatives boarded the *Winnipeg* and sailed for Chile. The ship was built for 20 crew members and was carrying more than 2,000 Spanish refugees. One month later, after a journey of over 7,500 miles (12,000 kilometres), the *Winnipeg* finally docked at the Chilean port of Valparaíso.

"The Chileans received us with tremendous warmth," Pey recalls. "I can clearly remember the reception we got when our train pulled in to Mapocho Station in Santiago. It was packed with people. And the Spanish government in exile had even arranged a subsidy for us – enough money for us to live on for six months in Chile."

Neruda remained fiercely proud of his role in organising the *Winnipeg*, describing it in his memoirs as "the crowning point of my life". "The hand I held out to the persecuted meant their salvation, and showed them the true nature of my country, which welcomed and championed them," he wrote. "There were fishermen, peasants, labourers, intellectuals, a cross-section of strength, heroism and hard work."

Pey never forgot his debt to Neruda and in 1948 seized the chance to repay it when Chilean President Gabriel González Videla outlawed the Communist Party, of which Neruda was a leading member. Neruda went into hiding and spent two months in Pey's tiny apartment in Santiago before making his own epic mountain escape, over the Andes into Argentina on horseback.

These days, Pey still lives in Chile. He's due to celebrate his 100th birthday later this year.

Gideon Long is a journalist living in Chile. He is the grandson of Sam Wild, the last commander of the British Battalion of the International Brigades.

Working Class Movement Library



Ramona: the

By Marshall Mateer

A newspaper cutting from *La Dona Catalana* – a Barcelona women's magazine – dated September 1936 has come to light in the Working Class Movement Library (WCML) in Salford. Printed in sepia it shows a young woman, head and shoulders, smiling in her militia cap and overalls with the caption in Catalan saying: "A beautiful and brave militiawoman ready to go to the [Aragon] front".

Her name is Ramona Siles García, a nurse who joined the militias and whom we have known until now simply as "Ramona", the one woman in the iconic Tom Mann Centuria photograph taken at the Karl Marx Barracks in Barcelona in September 1936.

Ramona met Londoner Nat Cohen under fire on the beaches of Mallorca in August 1936 as they were strafed and bombed by Italian aircraft during the militia's disorderly retreat from the island. Siles and Cohen, who after eight years in South America was a fluent Spanish speaker, remained together from that day until Ramona died in London 28 years later in August 1965.

Ramona and Nat were married, and after Nat Cohen was wounded – his knee-cap blown away on the Aragon front – they crossed the Spanish border and made their way to England via Paris.

When he returned to London on 9 April 1937 and the *Daily Mirror* of the following day reported that "he limped home on crutches... and was given a conqueror's reception by the Communist



Above: Ramona Siles García with (in profile) Sam Masters and (with his back to the camera) Nat Cohen. The photo was taken between mid October and mid November 1936 near Tardienta on the Aragon front.

Left: Ramona pictured in *La Dona Catalana* of September 1936.

Right: Ramona in the famous photograph of the Tom Mann Centuria of early volunteers, mainly from Britain, taken in Barcelona in September 1936; from left are Sid Avner, Nat Cohen, Ramona Siles García, Tom Wintringham, Giorgio Trioli, Jack Barry and David Marshall. The banner reads: “English Antifascist Tom Mann Centuria: proletarian discipline will defeat fascism”.



militia woman who settled in England

Party and a guard of anti-Fascist ex-Servicemen wearing their medals jumped to attention on Victoria platform, but he was a sad man. His pretty wife Ramona... was detained in Paris by passport difficulties.”

Ramona arrived in London a few days later and, as advertised in the *Daily Worker* on 17 April, “Romona[sic] (Nat’s wife, 1st Spanish militia-woman)” was to be on the platform with Nat at

“Yes, I used to carry a gun, and use it too. Whether I killed any of Franco’s soldiers I don’t know, but I did my best to do so in the battles in which I took part. I think I must have done. I shall never forget that I am a Spaniard and fought for my beloved country.”

the Whitechapel Gallery for the “grand wind-up” of an Aid for Spain parade, which would begin that Sunday in Stepney with “Decorated Lorries, Ambulances, 20-foot foodship, Militiamen, Nurses and Sailors” and hear “the final and magnificent total collected in Stepney’s Spain week”.

Ramona also spoke at other meetings and, according to a *Daily Worker* small ad, offered “Spanish lessons”. After a period of evacuation from Stepney to Hertfordshire to avoid the bombing during the Second World War, the couple moved to the St Helier estate in Morden, South London. The Cohens were amongst those who helped the Basque children’s colony at Carshalton, near where they lived.

In 1944 in South London a local newspaper reporter attended a “Christmas Treat for 250 Children”. Someone points out the “Organiser, Mrs Ramona Cohen” and says something along the lines of: “You see that woman; she fought in the Spanish Civil War.”

Ramona then explained to the eager reporter, in one of the very few records we have of her talking: “I fought on two fronts Mallorca and Aragon. There were quite a number of women in the Spanish army for they were short of men. We wore trousers, our battle-dresses being something like a boiler-maker’s overalls.”

She continued: “Yes, I used to carry a gun, and use it too. Whether I killed any of Franco’s soldiers I don’t know, but I did my best to do so in the battles in which I took part. I think I must have done. I shall never forget that I am a

Spaniard and fought for my beloved country.” The report ends with a quotidian flourish, “...and then she went on cutting sandwiches.”

You can see Ramona smiling in the much replicated Tom Mann Centuria photograph. In the captions to the photograph the names of the men are always given in full: Sid Avner, Jack Barry, Nat Cohen, David Marshall, Giorgio Trioli and Tom Wintringham.

But the single woman is given only her fore-name, Ramona, or sometimes she is referred to as “later Nat Cohen’s wife”—never Ramona Siles García.

In England she used the short form Ramona Siles in official documents. It is to be hoped that in future, in respect of the photograph’s captions, she will be given her full name and stand alongside the men on equal terms, just as she did on that day in the Karl Marx Barracks in September 1936 and just as she did in her commitment to fight for the Republic and against fascism.

Marshall Mateer, who is the IBMT Film Coordinator, is researching the early months of volunteer action in Spain. The photographs and newspaper clippings referred to above form part of the WCML Spanish Civil War collection – parts of which are now online at [www.wcml.org.uk]. He wishes to thank the WCML and their archive volunteer Stuart Walsh for help with this work. If anyone has any knowledge of other early volunteers in Spain, for example Sam Masters, Alec Sheller, Sid Avner or Richard Kisch, contact [marshall.mateer@btinternet.com].



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EXTRAS

By Stuart Walsh

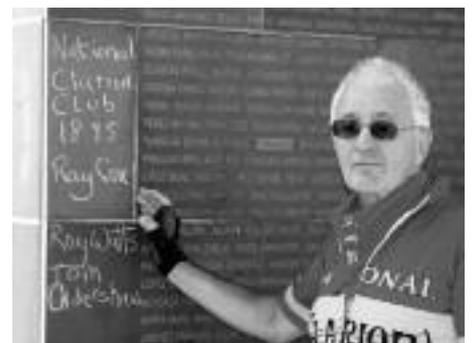
The National Clarion Cycle Club was founded in 1895 and was from its inception an explicitly socialist cycling club. Seven of its members whom we know of went to Spain to fight against fascism. Ray Cox, Tom Dolan, Tom Oldershaw and Roy Watts paid the ultimate price. Three others, Dr Colin Bradsworth, Joe Maiden and Lionel Poxon, continued the fight on home ground, as in the pledge made by all of the departing International Brigaders in 1938: "We are returning to our respective countries not for celebrations in our honour, but to continue the fight we helped to wage in Spain; we are merely changing the fronts and the weapons."

New material and facts about these brave men are coming in all the time. Lionel Poxon was only added to our list this year, Joe Maiden last year and Tom Oldershaw a couple of years ago. All of them had long been known as Brigaders; it was just their membership of Clarion that we are at last bringing to light.

Of those who went out to fight in the Spanish Civil War, **Ray Cox** of Southampton was the first to die, at Boadilla on 20 December 1936, aged 22. Cox was a member of the Southern Counties Union of National Clarion. In his own words he went to Spain because: "I believe that by fighting for the Spanish Government against the forces of Fascism I shall be helping to preserve the peace throughout Europe."

Tommy Dolan of Sunderland was the next to fall, at the Battle of Jarama in February 1937 at the age of 24. An unemployed shipbuilder, he was very active in the National Unemployed Workers' Movement and had taken part in some of their marches against the hated means test. Selling his bicycle and other sporting kit to finance his trip, he went to Spain, in his own words: "In a most definite way to express my hatred of fascism, and to strike a blow for freedom and democracy."

Tom Oldershaw of London died on the Aragon front sometime in March 1938, also aged 24. He was a carpenter and a committed fighter in the trade union and labour movement, being vice-president of his trade union branch, a member of Battersea Communist Party and the local trades council and the first secretary of its Aid to Spain



NAMED: Manuel Moreno of the National Clarion Cycling Club 1895 with names of three club members killed in Spain chalked on a memorial to Spanish Republican dead in Sartaguda, Navarra. Moreno was taking part in a Clarion cycle ride from Bilbao to Barcelona in 2013.

International Brigade Memorial Trust



From left: Colin Bradsworth, Ray Cox, Tommy Dolan, Joe Maiden and Roy Watts.

Clarion cyclists in Spain

Committee, all this in addition to his membership of the Clapham section of Clarion. He was posted missing in March 1938, but it was not until the autumn of that year

that his friends and family could bring themselves to admit that he had died, as recorded in the October issue of the Clarion journal, *Boots*: "After months of anxiety we are forced to the conclusion that he must have been killed on the battlefield. It is sad indeed, to know that we no longer have this wonderful and heroic comrade in our ranks."

Last to fall was **Roy Watts** of Leicester during the Battle of the Ebro in September 1938. Roy was a member of the Young Communist League and the Shop Assistants' Union, and a popular member of his local Clarion section. Writing to friends he said: "I am happy and proud to place my services with the workers of Spain in their



heroic fight against the bestialities of Fascism; we have nothing in common with the outlook of Fascists who glorify death as their ideal. We love life, but because we love it we do

not begrudge giving it in order to save humanity from the enemies of life. Many of our best comrades have already fallen, and we do not hide the bitter pain of their loss, but their deaths call not for mourning but for action." Roy was 23 years old.

Of those who returned, **Dr Colin Bradsworth**, from Birmingham, is the best known. He served for two years in the medical team of the Canadian Mackenzie-Papineau Battalion and returned to England in 1938. Shortly afterwards he was the founder member of the Birmingham Socialist Medical Association, and was later instrumental in setting up the Birmingham Clarion Choir.

We only found out about **Joe Maiden** of

Rotherham in recent months. He went out to Spain probably in late 1937, and was captured and imprisoned in Palencia prison in April 1938. He was among a batch of 20 prisoners released in October of 1938 and they, along with others from another prison, were repatriated to England on 28 October. We have a picture of him with two other Yorkshire prisoners, Alf Stirling of Sheffield and Stephen Ward of Barnsley, at Sheffield Midland Station on 30 October.

An article in the *Daily Worker* gives an account of their return: "The flags of the Spanish Republic were displayed gaily on the platform, and a large number of people were there to greet the returned heroes." On the following Monday, all were reported as showing signs of their harsh treatment; nevertheless, in spite of this, Alf Stirling was out canvassing for the Labour candidate in a local council election, and the *Daily Worker* article ends with the words: "All are anxious to get back into the fray and do what they can to help Spain."

We only found out about **Lionel Poxon** in March this year. All we know is that he was from Sutton, Birmingham, and that he returned from Spain on 7 October 1938. If anyone has any information on him please get in touch with me at: [s.walsh13@hotmail.co.uk].

As for us, we cherish the memory of these volunteers, and we do this best not just by telling their stories but by opposing fascism in all its forms and all attacks on the working class and other exploited groups. ¡No pasarán!

Stuart Walsh is a member of the IBMT and National Clarion Cycling Club 1895. A longer version of this article appears in the club's latest newsletter.

Exploring Madrid's invisible Spanish Civil War history

By Almudena Cros

For visitors to Madrid, this can be "the city that never sleeps", an oasis of relaxation, an art lovers' paradise, or even a place for foodies to indulge.

The city council offers a wide range of walking tours on all sorts of themes: city parks, literature, history of the monarchy, urban legends and crime stories; there's even one on the gory subject of the Inquisition. What you will not find, however, is any reference to the Spanish Civil War.

Unlike in Barcelona, where the topic is publicly acknowledged and you can visit an air-raid shelter from the war, anyone could be forgiven for thinking that Madrid must have been relatively untouched by the conflict, and therefore there is nothing to show the visitor.

Is it any wonder? This is a city



Almudena Cros (centre) leads a guided tour of the Spanish capital.

governed by the Partido Popular, a conservative party that claims that we live in a healthy democracy and that we have all overcome that "episode" and must look ahead instead of looking back. Oddly, however, it's perfectly fine to educate tourists on the topic of the cruel Inquisition.

That's why I designed a walking tour of the Spanish Civil War in Madrid to educate residents and visitors alike about the subject. Using original documentation and

photographs from my family, as a native *madrileña* I describe the conditions under which not only my grandparents but thousands of other local families lived through the war in Republican Madrid.

The tour includes a discussion of the crucial role of the International Brigades in the defence of Madrid. A percentage of my proceeds is donated to the AABI International Brigades friendship group in Spain. I'm fully committed to the preservation of their exemplary legacy.

Beyond showing visitors the visible effect of the war on the damaged fabric of buildings and monuments, there is also the emotional and psychological scars that haunt so many families, still searching for their relatives and trying to overcome the trauma caused by the relentless persecution and public humiliation they were subjected to throughout the dictatorship.

To discover and acknowledge these wounds is the first step towards healing the damage.

Dr Almudena Cros is an art historian and President of the AABI, the Madrid-based Association of Friends of the International Brigades. She will be one of the speakers at the IBMT's annual commemoration on 4 July in London's Jubilee Gardens.

To find out more about these tours visit [www.acrossmadrid.com/en].



MARTIN GREEN: With daughter Katie at an IBMT commemoration in Jubilee Gardens, London.

Martin Green

By Jim Jump

Martin Green, poet, publisher and writer, died on 4 February at the age of 82.

The son of two International Brigade volunteers, he was a founder member of the IBMT in 2001 and for many years one of our most active supporters.

Before then, along with Dolly West-Shaer, he founded the Friends of the International Brigades in the 1990s. FIB members later joined with veterans in the International Brigade Association (IBA) to create the IBMT.

Martin's father, George Green, a cellist from Stockport, was killed in the British Battalion's last day of action in the Battle of the Ebro in September 1938. Mother Nan Green, from Beeston, Nottinghamshire, who died in 1984, was an administrator with the British medical

volunteers and for many years was the Secretary of the IBA.

Born in Stockport on 10 July 1932, Martin attended AS Neill's Summerhill school in Suffolk while his parents served in Spain. His fees were paid by fellow International Brigader Wogan Philipps (later Lord Milford).

In later life Martin had a distinguished career in London as a literary editor and publisher. He also wrote eight books of his own, including "Guide to London Pubs" (with Tony White in 1965), "A Year in the Drink" (1982) and "The Other Jerome K Jerome" (1984).

As a poet, he wrote "Gandesa: Elegy for the Dead in Spain 1936-1939", first published in a 36-page pamphlet in 1986. It is a monumental work, listing all the British and Irish dead of the Spanish Civil War. The roll call, interspersed with incantations of home towns and places of death, takes up seven of the poem's 15 sections. Before and after each of these sections are verses addressed to his dead father George.

He wrote in the foreword to the pamphlet: "Writing this elegy has enabled me to do two things. To say farewell to a father I last saw when I was four years old and to give a more permanent memorial to the men of the British Battalion of the XV International Brigade who died in Spain."

Green co-founded the literary periodical *Nimbus* in 1951 and in 1969, with poet Paul Durcan, started the poetry quarterly *Two Rivers*. As a literary editor at MacGibbon & Kee, he published books such as Nell Dunn's "Up the Junction" in 1963. Along with Tim O'Keefe and Brian Rooney he went on to form Martin, Brian & O'Keefe. Here, Green published books by leading British and Irish writers, including Robert Graves, Patrick Kavanagh, Hugh MacDiarmid and Colin MacInnes.

According to "Characters of Fitzrovia" (Mike Pentelow and Marsha Rowe, 2001), while living in London in the 1960s, Martin hosted meetings by Thabo Mbeki and the then banned African National Congress. It was during this time that he was also a well known figure in Soho's lively bohemian scene.

He had three marriages and six children. After leaving London there was an interlude running a pub in rural Wales before he eventually settled in Newlyn, Cornwall.

César Covo

French International Brigader César Covo died in March, aged 102, in Rennes. Born in 1912 in Bulgaria into a Sephardic Jewish family, he settled in France in 1930 and joined the Communist Party. He was among the first volunteers who fought in Casa de Campo to defend Madrid and was wounded in the Battle of Guadalajara in March 1937. During the Second World War he joined the Resistance where, as a trained printer, he became an expert in the forgery of official documents. In 2005 he published a memoir, "La Guerre, camarade!" (Biarritz: Atlantica, 2005).

The virtues of the Spanish stretcher

Dr Freddy Shaw (*IBMT Newsletter 1-2015*) discusses some of the medical advances made during the Spanish Civil War. Len Crome wrote about some matters that were less glamorous but at the same time important.

Just after the outbreak of the Second World War he wrote an article in the *British Medical Journal* about one of the most important pieces of medical equipment – the stretcher.

In Spain both the military and civilian authorities used the same design of stretcher whist in Britain there was the standard RAMC stretcher and the stretcher developed for civilian casualties use.

Len described the properties the ideal stretcher should have: as light as possible; comfortable, for sometimes patients will have to lie on them for 24 hours; they must be robust; they must be able to be decontaminated; they should be capable of holding some part of the patient's body in elevation; they must be clear of the ground, making injections, infusions etc easier; they should be so designed that they can be used in vehicles not originally designed as ambulances; they must be able to have attachments such as splints; and they must be able to be carried (empty) by one person.

The virtues of the Spanish stretcher were extolled!

Peter Crome

By email

Recollections of Jimmy Moon

I was most interested in the letter regarding Jimmy Moon (issue 1-2015). In 1963 I was a 24-year-old active member of the Communist Party of Great Britain (CPGB) as well as an activist in the Ex Service Movement for Peace, of which Edgar Young was the president.

That same year I was one of four delegates who were invited on a three-week visit to the German Democratic Republic (GDR). The other three were Jimmy Moon, George Baker from the Rhondda and Abe Wise, a London taxi-driver. Moon and Baker were both former members of the International Brigades.

We were invited to spend the three weeks at the Else Fenske Heim, which was formerly the hunting lodge of the Nazi Gauleiter for Saxony, Martin Mutschmann, who was later hanged by the Allies. The home was now named after a well known anti-fascist.

Also stopping at the home at the same time was the distinguished barrister DN Pritt and his wife Molly. Pritt was writing a pamphlet about the former leading Nazi Hans Globke, then a high-ranking official in the West German government.

Also there was the man who was to become my future father-in-law, Walter Jakutsch, along

CAN YOU HELP?



Thomas Sloan

John Sloan is trying to identify the two other people who are pictured with his grandfather, Thomas Sloan (on right), in Spain in 1938. Thomas was a labourer from Glasgow when he joined the British Battalion in March 1938. He was wounded during the Battle of the Ebro on 31 July of that year and returned home with the rest of the battalion on 7 December. If you think you can help John, contact the IBMT Secretary: [secretary@international-brigades.org.uk].

Thanks for your support: our exhibition was a great success

We are very grateful to the IBMT for your support of our exhibition “Conscience and Conflict: British Artists and the Spanish Civil War”. This could not have been mounted without the generous support of the IBMT both as lenders and funders.

At Pallant House Gallery the exhibition attracted over 13,000 visitors from across the UK and further afield, with a significant number of Spanish visitors. The exhibition is now touring to the Laing Art Gallery in Newcastle upon Tyne from 7 March to 7 June.

The accompanying events

programme was a great success, with nearly all talks sold out, and in addition we presented a powerful premiere of Grace Nichol’s play “Dora versus Picasso” and recitals of poetry of the Spanish Civil War. The New Park Cinema in Chichester screened two films to complement the exhibition [“The Guernica Children” by Steve Bowles and “Land and Freedom” by Ken Loach] and the Novium Museum presented your “Antifascistas” display about the International Brigades.

The exhibition was widely and very favourably reviewed in a great



many publications. The visitors’ comments book was overflowing with personal responses to the show and, as well as greatly enjoying the exhibition, many

visitors were clearly moved.

Simon Martin
Artistic Director
Pallant House Gallery
Chichester

with his wife Giesela and daughter Heike. Heike was to become my wife 12 months later in December 1964 (we celebrated our golden wedding in December last year).

Walter Jakutsch and his brother Franz had been members of the KPD (German Communist Party) in Königsberg (now Kaliningrad), where they were arrested by the Nazis and imprisoned in Sachsenhausen concentration camp for 10 years.

Whilst in the GDR the four of us had many interesting conversations with DN Pritt on many wide-ranging topics. I remember Jimmy Moon as a man full of nervous energy and boundless enthusiasm. George Baker was an older man, an ex-miner and CPGB member who was as tough as teak.

One of the trips we made was to a local cemetery, where we were shown the well tended grave of International Brigade member Frank Ryan.

We returned from the GDR in the same way as we had arrived, by train from the



IN THE SAME BOAT: Jimmy Moon (left) with (from right) Ken Thomas, Heike Jakutsch and Abe Wise in Grillenburg, East Germany, in August 1963.

Friedrichstrasse station in Berlin. Sadly I never saw Jimmy again.

I returned to live in the GDR for several years and while there, through my father-in-law, who was a member of an anti-fascist committee, met many German former members of the International Brigades. I also met and acted as interpreter for a visiting American International Brigader, Irving Goff.

Ken Thomas
Swansea

Poignant inscription

I was proud to attend a celebration of the life of stalwart trade unionist Sid Paris (1920-2014) in Dundee recently. Sid was a painter and decorator by trade, and a fellow member of my union, UCATT, for construction workers. He also served for many years as the President of the Dundee Trades Union Council.

Sid always regretted being too young to join the International Brigades, but he was very proud of the Dundee volunteers who fought fascism in Spain and was a friend of many veterans of that fight. Seventeen of the city’s more than 70 volunteers died in Spain.

While in Dundee, Mike Arnott, the IBMT Trustee in Scotland and Secretary of the Dundee Trades Union Council, advised me to visit the memorial in Albert Square to the International Brigades. Sid had been one of the campaigners for the memorial, which was unveiled in 1975.

It was a poignant experience for me. I also went in the nearby McManus Galleries and found out more about the contribution that the people of Dundee made in that period of history in the fight against fascism.

Afterwards I laid a bunch of red roses at the memorial, having read the inscription by Russian writer Nikolai Ostrovsky: “Man’s dearest possession is life. It is given to him but once, and he must live it so as to feel no

torturing regrets for wasted years, never know the burning shame of a mean and petty past; so live that, dying, he might say: all my life, all my strength were given to the finest cause in all the world – the fight for the liberation of mankind.”

Tom Lannon
London SW6

Asking the right question

Readers may be interested to know that one of the questions in my son’s mock History GCSE test was about the Spanish Civil War, despite this only meriting a paragraph in the textbook for his course. Luis Bolín was cited as an “unreliable source” and quoted discussing the International Brigades. There were cartoons of the period parodying Britain’s “non-intervention” stance. Daniel hopes to do quite well in the exam, having been indoctrinated in the subject for the past 10 years!

Karl Lewkowicz
By email

Correction to Limerick Brigaders article

Further to the photographs published on page 24 in the last *IBMT Newsletter* (1-2015), despite the strong similarity in appearance between machine-gunner Maurice Ryan in the first photo and the crouching man in the second, Alan Warren has since informed me that he has identified the latter as having been Alun Menai Williams, not Ryan. I was, accordingly, mistaken in thinking that Alan should have reproduced that second photo in his biographical profile of Ryan. I was, of course, correspondingly mistaken in assuming that Maurice Ryan’s conscience had moved him to become a first responder when the irresponsible neglect of a loaded machine-gun resulted in the fatal wounding of a Spanish Republican soldier.

Manus O’Riordan
By email

Tales of inspiration, intrigue and innovation



“Hell and Good Company: The Spanish Civil War and the World It Made” by Richard Rhodes (London: Simon & Schuster, 2015) £20 (hardback)

Reviewed by Jim Jump

The Spanish Civil War may have been a human, military and diplomatic catastrophe, but it was clearly also a ripping good yarn. There’s no other way to explain the incessant stream of new books on the subject, not just from historians but also novelists, journalists and acclaimed writers. This latest offering by Pulitzer Prize-winning author Richard Rhodes uses a familiar template to retell the story of the war through the eye-witness accounts and experiences of many of its most famous participants, especially artists and writers.

The roll-call is familiar: Pablo Picasso, Joan Miró, Martha Gellhorn, Ernest Hemingway, André Malraux, George Orwell, John Dos Passos and Stephen Spender, to name just a few. In this sense “Hell and Good Company” resembles another

recent offering in the same genre, “I Am Spain” (2013) by David Boyd Haycock. The course of the war is followed through the reportage and memoirs of these chosen protagonists and their various intrigues. There’s an in-built bias towards the role and judgments of intellectual outsiders, especially from Britain and the US, rather than ordinary Spaniards. But there’s no denying that this technique makes for a very good read, and one that in this case succeeds in clearly outlining and explaining the tragic course of the war.

What makes “Hell and Good Company” a particularly compelling read is that Rhodes has obviously read and absorbed not just the usual texts about the war in Spain, but also those, for example, that draw on new research and evidence. On Picasso’s inspiration for the

creation of “Guernica”, thanks to the work of Martin Minchom we now understand how the artist developed the imagery in his masterpiece in response to French newspaper reports of the bombing of Madrid that took place well before the destruction of the Basque town of Guernica.

There is testimony too from less well known observers of events in Spain. The young New Zealand journalist Geoffrey Cox – later to become the head of ITN News – was in Madrid on 8 November 1936 when the first International Brigade units arrived, marching up the Gran Vía on their way to the front. “‘The Rusos [Russians] have come,’ the barman told Cox, relief in his voice. Cox heard a sergeant shouting an order in Prussian-accented German, heard others shouting in Italian and French, and knew they weren’t Russians. They were, he quickly learned, the first brigade of the International Column of Anti-Fascists, ‘the most truly international army the world has seen since the Crusades.’”

Another admirable aspect of the book is that the significance of the medical efforts and innovations that were made during the Spanish Civil War are not overlooked, as is sadly so often the

“Richard Rhodes uses a familiar template to retell the story of the war through the eye-witness accounts and experiences of many of its most famous participants, especially artists and writers.”

Books for sale

London’s Marx Memorial Library is the home of the International Brigade Memorial Archive and holds a large number of books, pamphlets, periodicals and documents relating to the Spanish Civil War. Over the years it has accumulated many duplicate copies of books and is now offering these for sale to IBMT members in order to raise funds necessary for improving the cataloguing and maintenance of the archive.

The Library welcomes book donations and always ensures that all donated titles are available for use by researchers. The Library does not sell inscribed, personalised or unique copies.

Add £2.50 to the listed price to cover postage costs, plus £1.50 for each additional item. Email [admin@mml.xyz] to place an order and arrange payment by PayPal. Alternatively, send cheques payable to “Marx Memorial Library” with name and address to: Marx Memorial Library, 37a Clerkenwell Green, London EC1R 0DU. Cheques will be returned if orders cannot be met.

Stocks are limited and orders will be dealt with on a “first come” basis.

● PB paperback; HB hardback

● Condition: VG very good; G good; R reasonable; P poor

● *Indicates more than one copy is available for sale.

Victor Alba

- “Sleepless Spain” Cobbett (1948) HB G £12

Bill Alexander

- “British Volunteers for Liberty Spain 1936-1939” Lawrence & Wishart (1982) HB VG £17*
- “British Volunteers for Liberty Spain 1936-1939” Lawrence & Wishart (1982) PB G £12

Richard Baxell

- “British Volunteers in the Spanish Civil War” Routledge (2004) HB VG £15

Anthony Beevor

- “The Spanish Civil War” Orbis (1982) HB VG £5

Alvah Bessie

- “The Un-Americans” Seven Seas (1957) HB VG £5

Tom Buchanan

- “Britain and the Spanish Civil War” Cambridge University Press (1997) PB VG £12

Raymond Carr

- “Images of the Spanish Civil War” Allen & Unwin (1986) HB VG £5*

Raymond Carr (editor)

- “The Republic and the Civil War in Spain” Macmillan (1971) HB G £5

Jack Gibbs

- “The Spanish Civil War” Ernest Benn (1987) HB VG £5

Frank Graham

- “Battle of Jarama 1937” Frank Graham (1999) PB VG £6

Jason Gurney

- “Crusade in Spain” Readers’ Union (1974) HB VG £5

Ernest Hemingway

- “The Fifth Column” Grafton Books (1978) PB G £3
- “For Whom the Bell Tolls” Penguin (1978) PB R £2

Richard Kisch

- “They Shall Not Pass: The Spanish People at War 1936-9” Wayland (1974) HB G £5

AH Landis

- “Spain: The Unfinished Revolution” International Publishers (1972) PB G £7

Frances Lannon

- “The Spanish Civil War 1936-1939” Osprey (2002) PB VG £4

Laurie Lee

- “A Moment of War” Viking (1991) HB VG £5
- “A Moment of War” Penguin (1992) PB R £2

Brian Lewis & Bill Gledhill

- “Tommy James: A Lion of a Man” Yorkshire Art Circus (1985) PB VG £6

Arnold Lunn

- “Spanish Rehearsal” Hutchinson (1937) PB R £7

Don Justo Medio

- “Three Pictures of the Spanish Civil War” Hutchinson (1937) HB VG £25

David Mitchell

- “The Spanish Civil War” Granada (1982) HB VG £5
- “The Spanish Civil War” Granada (1982) PB VG £3

George Orwell

- “Homage to Catalonia” Penguin (1962) PB P £6
- “Homage to Catalonia” Penguin

(1966) PB G £5

- “Homage to Catalonia” Penguin (1969) PB R £4

Stanley G Payne

- “The Spanish Revolution” Weidenfeld & Nicholson (1970) PB R £4
- “A History of the Falange” Stanford University (1965) PB R £3

Michael Petrou

- “Renegades: Canadians in the Spanish Civil War” University of British Columbia Press (2008) PB VG £4

Frank Pitcairn

- “Reporter in Spain” Lawrence & Wishart (1936) HB R/P £8

William Rust

- “Britons in Spain: A History of the British Battalion of the XVth International Brigade” (reprint of 1939 edition) Warren & Pell (2003) PB VG £5*

Frank Ryan (editor)

- “The Book of the XV Brigade” (reprint of 1938 publication of the Commissariat of War, XV Brigade) Warren & Pell (2003) HB VG £12

Harry Stratton

- “To Anti-Fascism by Taxi” Alun Books (1984) PB VG £6

Hugh Thomas

- “The Spanish Civil War” Penguin (1965) PB R £3*

Josep Trueta

- “The Spirit of Catalonia” Oxford University Press (1946) PB VG £55

Stanley Weintraub

- “The Last Great Cause: The Intellectuals and the Spanish Civil War” WH Allen (1968) HB G £5

case in other histories. Catalan surgeon Josep Trueta pioneered the technique of sealing compound fractures under plaster, with the result that 91 per cent of his patients – including many International Brigaders – were satisfactorily

“The significance of the medical efforts and innovations that were made during the Spanish Civil War are not overlooked.”

rily healed, with a rate of only 8.5 per cent disabled and 0.5 per cent who died. This compares with a rate of 46 per cent of American soldiers with similar injuries in the First World War left permanently disabled and 12 per cent who died.

Rhodes makes extensive use of the first-hand accounts of several of the foreign medical volunteers in Spain. They include the Canadian Norman Bethune, whose ground-breaking mobile blood transfusion unit did heroic deeds amid the carnage of Franco’s deliberate targeting of refugees fleeing Málaga. After returning to New York from Spain, Edward Barsky set about campaigning for the Joint Anti-Fascist Refugee Committee, raising the equivalent of \$5 million for the relief of Spanish Civil War refugees. During the McCarthyite witch-hunts of the late 1940s he was imprisoned for six months and struck off as a doctor, having refused to hand over the JAFRC’s membership list. “When a doctor cannot save lives in America because he is opposed to Franco in Spain,” Barsky commented, “it is time to call a halt and look critically at the neurosis that has possessed us.”

Angela Jackson’s 2012 biography of English nurse Patience Darton, “For us it was Heaven”, proves a useful source of texture and detail for Rhodes. “She looked like the kind of beautiful hospital nurse one dreams of,” wrote one colleague.



Patience Darton: “The kind of beautiful hospital nurse one dreams of”.

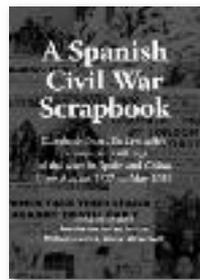
But Darton was also a hardy and highly competent practitioner, often working in horrendous front-line conditions. And she was deeply politically and emotionally committed to the cause of Spain, marrying a German-Jewish International Brigader who was to be killed in the Battle of the Ebro in July 1938. She makes several appearances in this book, and fittingly has the final say in its epilogue, with Rhodes quoting Jackson’s moving account of how Patience died in November 1996 while visiting Spain for the 60th anniversary of the start of the civil war.

Jim Jump is the Secretary of the IBMT and the editor of “A Spanish Civil War Scrapbook” (see right).



Cutting despatches from Spain

The powerful impact that words and images from the Spanish Civil War had on a generation who lived through the tragic defeat of the Spanish Republic can be seen in a unique new publication from the IBMT.



“A Spanish Civil War Scrapbook” reproduces the two-volume collection of press cuttings kept by a teenage trainee nurse in South Yorkshire during much of the war in Spain. The compiler was Elizabeth

Pearl Bickerstaffe – who was to become the mother of Rodney Bickerstaffe, IBMT Patron and the former General Secretary of Unison.

Reviewing the book for the Unison magazine *InFocus*, Mary Maguire wrote: “Pearl chose her cuttings well. They bring home the starkness of the war, the waste, the devastation, and, as a contemporary account, complete with photographs.

“It’s more alive than any history book could be. Its contents are at times sombre, at times exciting, but inevitably tragic.”

In his foreword Rodney Bickerstaffe tells of the lasting influence that the Spanish Civil War had on him through his mother’s scrapbook, both as a child and in later life.

Another contributor is Paul Preston, the world’s leading authority on the Spanish Civil War, who writes about the crucial role of foreign correspondents in the war in Spain.

The preface by IBMT Secretary Jim Jump explains more about the context and significance of Pearl Bickerstaffe’s chronicle of one of the major episodes in 20th century history.

Published jointly by the IBMT and Lawrence & Wishart, this is a 212-page, coffee table-sized book (measuring 21cm x 30cm).

In his review in the *Morning Star*, Tom Sibley said it was a “splendid” publication. “And it’s essential reading because, as Bickerstaffe stresses in his foreword, it’s vital that future generations learn the lessons of what happened in Spain and know about the sacrifice of so many of the finest young people of their generation in the cause of freedom, social justice and democracy – a struggle that continues to this day.”

The normal retail price for a “A Spanish Civil War Scrapbook: Elizabeth Pearl Bickerstaffe’s newspaper cuttings of the wars in Spain and China from August 1937 to May 1939” is £25. The book is available from the IBMT for £15 including p&p. See the merchandise panel on our inside back cover.

CUTTINGS KEEP FLAME ALIVE

The 1930s civil war in Spain, when 150,000 people over three and a half million fled, ended socialist government, was a murderous dress rehearsal for the Second World War.

There were 2,500 British and women who left their lives to join the International Brigades against Franco’s forces. Many never returned.

Others, like union leader Jack Jones and writer George Orwell, were lucky to survive. Some wrote memoirs, but until

now we haven’t seen the extraordinary archive of contemporary newspaper reports that were kept by a 17-year-old girl from April 1937 until the war ended with the defeat of democracy in 1939.

That girl was Elizabeth Pearl Bickerstaffe (you may have heard of her better known son Rodney, the former leader of Unison).

Her scrapbooks have been reworked and published in book form by the

International Brigade Trust, a registered charity. They make donations, instructive, heart-rendering reading. But, as Rodney says in a foreword, publication of these years later is needed to keep the flame alight.

“It’s vital that future generations learn the lessons of what happened in Spain and know about the sacrifice of that generation in the cause of freedom, social justice and democracy – a struggle that continues today,” he writes.

Amen to that.

You can find out more on www.internationalbrigades.org.uk.

REVIEW: What Paul Routledge said about the book in his weekly column in the *Daily Mirror* on 3 April.

A fitting tribute for Oxfordshire's volunteers

Under the heading "Fitting tribute" a leading article in the *Oxford Times* on 15 January heaped praise on "No Other Way", the new book about the Oxfordshire volunteers (reviewed in our last issue), and on the IBMT's plans for an International Brigade memorial in Oxford.

History books tend to focus on two famous Oxford events in the 1930s: the 1933 King and Country debate at the Oxford Union, and the famous 1938 by-election, when the Master of Balliol AD Lindsay stood as an anti-appeasement candidate following the Munich agreement. Both events certainly overshadowed the remarkable role that Oxfordshire and its people played almost 80 years ago in the story of the Spanish Civil War.

Hundreds of Basque refugee children were offered homes in Oxford, which became a centre of activism on behalf of the Spanish

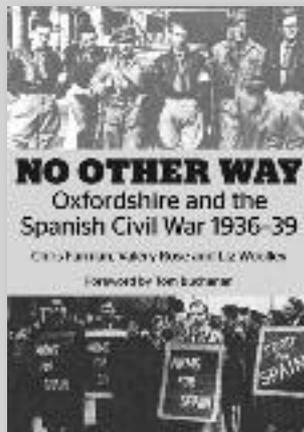
Republic and 31 men and women from the county joined the fight against Franco, either by taking arms or serving with medical units.

The cause united town and gown, the university and the city's burgeoning working class in a unique way. Six of the volunteers gave their lives serving the Republican cause, in a struggle that one historian called "a world war in miniature".

It is easy to understand why the International Brigade Memorial Trust believe that a memorial should be erected to those who went to Spain in 1936-39, and why they view Bonn Square as the most desirable location.

It is to the group's credit that when their proposal in the autumn went before the city council's west area planning committee, where questions were raised about the design and the prospect of the memorial adding clutter to the square, trust members did not despair.

Instead they have asked no fewer than eight sculptors to



come up with bolder designs, in what is effectively a competition, with designs now likely to be inspired by the posters that epitomised that period.

At the same time local members of the Trust have produced a painstakingly researched book, which for the first time tells us something about all 31 of Oxfordshire's Spanish Civil War volunteers.

Anyone who has any doubts about erecting a memorial in the city should read it, for it is

impossible not to be moved by the courage, conviction and selflessness of these men and women who stood against the forces of Fascism.

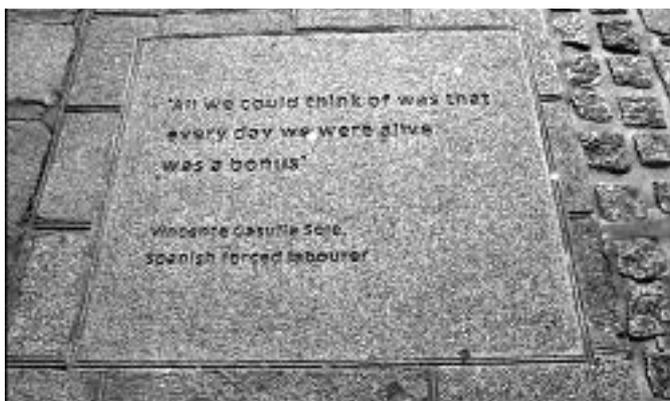
It is difficult too, not to be struck by their diverse backgrounds: for the volunteers included highly privileged university members, an Olympic gold medallist and a leading actor, but also men of humble origins like Victor Reginald Claridge, the son of a farm labourer from South Leigh, the 13th of 15 children who lived to 1978. The fundraising for the memorial still continues, but we hope that when designs are resubmitted the city council will ensure that Oxfordshire's rich and noble links with the Spanish Civil War will finally be properly celebrated in good time for its 80th anniversary.

To order "No Other Way", send a cheque made out to "IBMT" for £8 (includes £3 p&p) to: IBMT, 6 Stonells Road, London SW11 6HQ, giving your name and address. For overseas or bulk orders email [secretary@international-brigades.org.uk] for rates.



Martí Crespo was inspired to write his book (left) after seeing a memorial stone (right) in St Helier.

Far right: Cover of Juan Dalmau's memoir of his time as a slave worker in Guernsey.



Hitler's Spanish Republican slaves in the British Isles

A new book published in Spain tells the largely forgotten story of the Spanish Republican slave labour used by the Nazis during their occupation of the Channel Islands in the Second World War.

"Esclavos de Hitler" ("Hitler's Slaves") describes how between 1,500 and 2,000 Spanish refugees in France were shipped to the Channel Islands between 1940-45 to build the "Atlantic Wall" defensive system.

In harsh conditions and subject to brutal

treatment they worked alongside Jewish forced labour and Soviet prisoners of war.

Author Martí Crespo set out to write this study after a chance sighting in 2010 of a memorial stone dedicated to anti-fascist fighter Vicente Gasulla Solé while on a day trip to St Helier, the capital of Jersey, during a summer holiday in Brittany.

Solé, he found out, was a young Spanish Republican from Hostafrancs, Barcelona. He had been interned by the pro-Nazi Vichy gov-

ernment in France and then sent to Jersey. When the islands were liberated in 1945 he was one of several of the Spaniards who settled there.

Another such survivor was Juan Dalmau, who wrote a brief memoir of his ordeal, "Slave worker in the Channel Islands" (published in Guernsey in 1956).

**Esclavos de Hitler. Republicanos en los campos nazis del Canal de la Mancha" by Martí Crespo (Barcelona: Universitat Oberta de Catalunya, 2014) 13 euros.



Passionate family portrait

"Activists: Lessons from my Grandparents" by Lisa Croft (Manchester: Lisa Croft, 2015) £4.72*

Reviewed by Christopher Hall

Written by IBMT member Lisa Croft, this book is a passionate and remarkable story of her family, in particular concentrating on the life stories of her grandparents. Both were political and trade union activists and her grandfather, referred to as AC in the book: Archibald Campbell McAskill Williams, went to Spain and was captured at the Battle of Jarama in February 1937 and faced the horrors of being a prisoner of war.

Lisa's research of her relatives has led to stories about relatives in Canada, Ireland and the UK and it unfurls a bit like a Sherlock Holmes novel. Her love for the subject matter and her description of the excitement she and her mother felt as each mystery unfolds is very moving. Yes, there are the odd mistakes when giving background historical information, but this does not detract from the stories about her family members.

My only real criticism of the book is that Lisa mentions her grandfather's prison diaries in the section describing her research, and I would have liked those to have been reprinted wholesale in an appendix or quoted more extensively in the chapter on his time in Spain. Having said that, she

does give a web link where you can see the prison diaries. You will need to buy the book to discover this link.

Overall this is an excellent little book, not written by a historian, but by someone with a love and passion for the subject matter, which shines through every page. The picture of her mother standing in reflection on the very spot her father was captured at Jarama shows why works like this are so important in remembering those men and women who served in the International Brigades.

*Available from lulu.com: [www.lulu.com/shop/lisa-croft/activists-lessons-from-my-grandparents/paperback/product-22060676.html]. Christopher Hall is an IBMT Trustee and author of "In Spain with Orwell" (Perth: Tippermuir Books, 2013).



Chapter on International Brigade nurses

A new book* edited by Jane Brooks and Christine Hallett, "One Hundred Years of Wartime Nursing 1854-1953", contains a chapter,

"Blood and Guts: Nursing with the International Brigades in the Spanish Civil War, 1936-1939" written by Angela Jackson. Angela will be known to many IBMT members as the author of several books on Spanish Civil War themes, including a biography of nurse Patience Darton and "British Women and the Spanish Civil War". *Manchester University Press, 2015, £15.99 (paperback).



WIGAN Until 14 May: IBMT exhibition about International Brigade volunteers from the North-West of England at Wigan Library, The Wiend, WN1 1NH; [www.wigan.gov.uk/Resident/Libraries/Wigan-Library.aspx].

14 May: 7pm public meeting about the volunteers from Wigan and North-West.

NEWCASTLE UPON TYNE Until 7 June: "Conscience and Conflict: British Artists and the Spanish Civil War" exhibition at the Laing Art Gallery, New Bridge St, NE1 8AG; Tues to Sun 10am-5pm (Sun from 2pm); group tours on 2, 13, 16, 20 & 28 May and 3, 4, 5 & 6 June; contact [info@laingartgallery.co.uk] or 0191 211 2100 to book; details and admission rates from [www.twmuseums.org.uk/laing-art-gallery]; plus following events:

16 May: 2pm-3.45pm "To Make the People Smile Again", BBC radio drama-documentary on British contingent of International Brigades, including interviews with survivors; plus talks by Steve Chambers (University of Northumbria) and Martin Ellis (Zymurgy Publishing); free.

28 May: 2pm-3pm "Picasso's Weeping Woman in Context" talk by Barbara Morden (author and art historian); £2.

4 June: 6pm-9pm "Ink & drink": celebrate Spanish art and culture with live music, talks, demonstrations and create your own artwork; £10; includes entry on the day to the "Conscience and Conflict" exhibition.

NEWCASTLE UPON TYNE Until 7 June: The IBMT's "Antifascistas" exhibition at Newcastle City Library, Charles Avison Building, 33 New Bridge St West, NE1 8AG; open daily; to check times: [www.newcastle.gov.uk/leisure-libraries-and-tourism/libraries/branch-libraries-and-opening-hours/city-library].

NEWHAVEN Until 1 November: IBMT's "Antifascistas" and "Sussex and the Spanish Civil War" exhibition at Newhaven Fort, Fort Rd, BN9 9DS; see [www.newhavenfort.org.uk] for admission information.

CENTRAL SCOTLAND 1-22 May: Rehearsal readings of "From the Calton to Catalonia" play by Willy and John Maley about Interna-

Continued overleaf

ONLINE



Aragon tour videos and images

Two mini videos are now on the IBMTnews YouTube and Flickr sites showing clips from the IBMT's commemorative tour of Aragon last October, with notes underneath each (scroll down):

● Jane Bernal (above) reading the John Cornford poem "Full Moon at Tierz: Before the Storming of Huesca" [www.flickr.com/photos/ibmt/16480436801].

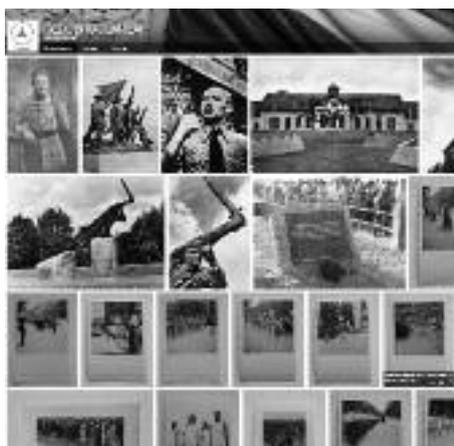
● Glenda Browne reading out a report of her cousin Felicia Browne's death in August 1936 [www.flickr.com/photos/ibmt/16297349187].

There are also over 60 still images from the tour, many with notes. See [www.flickr.com/photos/ibmt/16489297821]. The main link is to the "IBMT Aragon Tour" album, which puts the images in tour order: [www.flickr.com/photos/ibmt/sets/

72157649423188521]. For a link to a report of the Aragon tour see: [www.internationalbrigades.org.uk/content/ibmt-tour-aragon-battlefields-16-22-october-2015].

Photo archive

The Albacete-based University of La Mancha's Cedobi International Brigade website (below) has posted an interesting collection of photos online: [www.flickr.com/photos/iea_cedobi].



From previous page

tional Brigaders and families in Glasgow in 1937; at Calton Heritage & Learning Centre in Glasgow (1 May), Celtic Supporters' Club in Irvine (2 May), Oran Mor in Glasgow (3 May), Barony Theatre in Bo'ness (8 May), Beacon Arts Centre in Greenock (10 May) and Victoria Hall in Helensburgh (22 May); details from Calton Books: 0141 000 0001.

BELFAST 9 May: For the 70th anniversary of the defeat of Nazi Germany, Belfast's International Brigade Commemoration Committee hosts talk by Dr Connal Parr (Oxford University) "The Battle for the Future: Spain's Ongoing Civil War", 11am-1pm at: Unite, 26-34 Antrim Rd, BT15 2AA; plus from 7.30pm at Sunflower pub, Union St, BT1 2JG "A Time of Heroes: Songs of the International Brigades"; £5.

READING 10 May: Inauguration of International Brigade memorial at new site in Forbury Gardens, Abbot's Walk, RG1 3HW; timings etc to be announced; check [www.international-brigades.org.uk/events].

LIVERPOOL 23 May: Get-together for IBMT members, International Brigade relatives and supporters; includes rededication of Liverpool roll of honour plus two short talks; 10.30am-1pm; Unite, Jack Jones House, 2 Churchill Way, L3 8EF; for more information: [christoff_hall@yahoo.com].

LONDON 27 May: Seminar "Can Podemos win Spain's next general election?"; speaker: William Chislett (Real Instituto Elcano); 6pm at Cañada Blanch Centre, Cowdray House, LSE, Portugal St, WC2A 2AE [www.lse.ac.uk/europeaninstitute/research/canadaBlanch/events.aspx].

HAMBURG 29-31 May: Annual Anti-Fascist Harbour Event organised by KFSR German International Brigades friendship group; includes boat tour, film screening and talks; for more event information: [brigadistas@arcor.de].

INISTIOGE 26-27 June: 8th annual George Brown Commemoration Weekend in Co Kilkenny includes wreath-laying and tree-planting, talks by Harry Owens, Conor McCabe, Davy Kettlys and Tom McDonnell and music from Graiguenamanagh Brass Band: [www.georgebrowninistioige.com].

MADRID 27 June: Annual walk on Brunete battlefield organised by AABI Spanish International Brigades friendship group; see [www.brigadasinternacionales.org] for more information.

LONDON 4 July: Annual commemoration at the International Brigade memorial, Jubilee Gardens, South Bank, SE1; 1pm-2pm, with a social gathering afterwards; see back cover advert; contact [secretary@international-brigades.org.uk].

ABERDEEN 17 October: IBMT Annual General Meeting weekend; 50 rooms at rate of £65 per room b&b (singles or doubles) available for IBMT members at Aberdeen Douglas Hotel, 43-45 Market St, AB11 5EL [www.aberdeendouglas.com] tel: 01224 582 255; quote "IBMT15" when booking; rooms will be held until 28 days prior to arrival; for general AGM queries contact [secretary@international-brigades.org.uk].

● For updates and additional events, check [www.international-brigades.org.uk/events].

● Events not organised by the IBMT are the responsibility of the individuals and organisations concerned.



Doors open to the public

British Battalion banners and other Spanish Civil War artefacts on show at Marx Memorial Library

A "hidden gem" of London's radical and working class history has opened its doors properly to the public for the first time.

The Marx Memorial Library (MML) is now offering guided tours twice weekly. This will allow people to see the two banners of the British Battalion in the Spanish Civil War (pictured above).

One (on right) was sewn by the women of Barcelona and presented to the battalion on its departure from Spain at the end of 1938.

Designed and made by the anti-fascist Artists International Association (AIA) in Britain, the other banner also dates from 1938 and is the oldest original battalion banner.

Both were recently shown at the Pallant House Gallery in Chichester as part of the acclaimed "Conscience and Conflict: British Artists and the Spanish Civil War" exhibition.

The IBMT has now loaned the older banner to the MML so that it can be displayed alongside the one made in Spain.

The banner was last year at Newhaven Fort as part of the IBMT's "Antifascistas" and "Sussex and the Spanish Civil War" exhibition. A replica of the Barcelona banner will instead now be going to Newhaven.

Many other artefacts from the Spanish Civil War are on display at the MML, including posters, leaflets and photographs.

There is also a memorial courtyard dedicated to media workers killed in the 20th century war against fascism, from Spain in 1936 to victory in Europe in 1945.

Until now visits to the MML have been by appointment only or on special occasions.

The MML was founded by a group of socialists in 1933 in response to the Burning of the Books by the Nazis in May of that year and has been at the heart of the British labour movement ever since.

As well as memorabilia of major industrial disputes, other highlights include the room and desk where Lenin worked in exile in London in

1902/3 and a Hammersmith Socialist Society banner embroidered by the William Morris family, dating from the early 1890s.

There is also a 1934 mural by AIA artist Jack Hastings (later Lord Huntingdon), who had worked with the great Mexican muralist Diego Rivera in Mexico City – and who later visited wartime Spain as part of his efforts in support of the Spanish Republic.

The MML's Archivist, Meirian Jump, said: "We have a fascinating story to tell and we hope to welcome as many visitors as possible to be inspired by our amazing collections."

She added: "Everyone who enters the building agrees that we are one of London's hidden gems. We hope that thousands more people will now be able to understand why this is so."

Tours of the Marx Memorial Library (37a Clerkenwell Green, London EC1R 0DU) are on Tuesdays and Thursdays at 1pm; £5 (£3 unwaged). To book contact Monica Brown: [admin@mml.xyz] or 020 7253 1485.

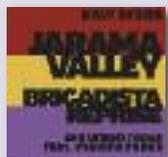


Above: Part of the Jack Hastings mural at the Marx Memorial Library (below).



IBMT merchandise

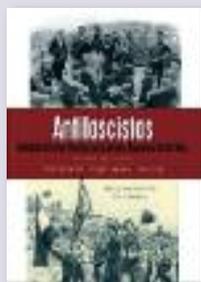
Proceeds help fund the commemorative, educational and publicity work of the trust



CD single

Exclusively for the IBMT, **Billy Bragg** performs "Jarama Valley" and **Maxine Peake** delivers Dolores Ibárruri's (La Pasionaria's) emotional farewell speech to the International Brigades with a dub backing from **The Urban Roots**.

£5 plus £1.99 p&p



Antifascistas

British and Irish Volunteers in the Spanish Civil War

The story of the volunteers in words and pictures, by Richard Baxell, Angela Jackson and Jim Jump (paperback).

£10 plus £2.99 p&p



Poems from Spain

Collection of poems written by British and Irish International Brigaders.

Edited by Jim Jump (paperback).

£10 plus £2.99 p&p

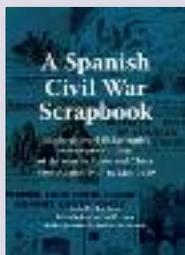


Looking Back at the Spanish Civil War

IBMT's Len Crome Memorial Lectures 2002-2010 by expert historians on the Spanish Civil War, including Helen Graham, Paul Preston, Francisco J Romero Salvadó, Richard Baxell, Enrique Moradiellos, Angela Jackson, Ángel Viñas and Julián Casanova.

Edited by Jim Jump (paperback).

£10 plus £3.99 p&p



A Spanish Civil War Scrapbook

Elizabeth Pearl Bickerstaffe's newspaper cuttings from the wars in Spain and China from August 1937 to May 1939

With a foreword by Rodney Bickerstaffe and introduction by Paul Preston. Edited by Jim Jump (210mm x 297mm; paperback).

£12 plus £3 p&p



Unlikely Warriors

The British in the Spanish Civil War and the Struggle Against Fascism

By Richard Baxell (hardback).

£15 plus £4.99 p&p



¡Salud!

British Volunteers in the Republican Medical Service during the Spanish Civil War

By Linda Palfreeman (paperback).

£12 plus £3.99 p&p



Tom Mann Centuria t-shirt

Made for the IBMT by t-shirt specialists Philosophy Football from ethically sourced cotton. Tom Mann Centuria banner on front. "International Brigade Memorial Trust" on sleeve. Available in S, M, L, XL, XXL and fitted women's size (see above for size details).

£13 plus £3.99 p&p



British Battalion t-shirt

In red or grey and made for the IBMT by t-shirt specialists Philosophy Football from ethically sourced cotton. British Battalion banner on front and "International Brigade Memorial Trust" on sleeve.

Available in:

S (36inch chest/90cms)

M (40inch/100cms)

L (44inch chest/110cms)

XL (48inch/120cms)

XXL (52inch/130cms)

Fitted women's (34-36inch/70-90cms).

£15 plus £3.99 p&p



Connolly Column t-shirt

Black cotton t-shirt with design (pictured) in Spanish Republican colours across chest commemorating the volunteers from Ireland. Available in S, M, L, XL.

£10 plus £3.99 p&p



No Pasaran tankard & Connolly Column mug

Made in the UK from finest bone china, the No Pasaran tankard (top) carries a quotation from La Pasionaria's farewell speech to the International Brigades in October 1938. The Connolly Column mug (bottom) commemorates the Irish volunteers and features words from Christy Moore's "Viva La Quince Brigada".

Each item: £7 plus £3.99 p&p



IBMT badge

Solid metal badge with International Brigade medal in centre and International Brigade Memorial Trust around the edge.

£3 plus £2.99 p&p



IBMT greetings card

Measuring approximately 15cm x 10cm, the IBMT greetings card features a drawing by Rafael Alberti dedicated to the International Brigades in 1996. Blank inside.

£5 for pack of 6 (including envelopes) plus £1.99 p&p



IBMT Orwell poster

A3 poster of George Orwell designed by Simon Hawkesworth of Fast Food Press for IBMT's 2013 Len Crome Memorial Lecture.

£2 plus £2.99 p&p

Send orders, including your name and address, a size and colour where appropriate, and a cheque payable to the IBMT to: IBMT Merchandise, 286 Brantingham Road, Manchester M21 0QU.

For multiple orders in the UK up to a value of £30 (excluding p&p) calculate total p&p by taking the highest p&p among items ordered, halving the p&p of the remaining items and adding them together. There is no p&p on orders for goods worth more than £30.

For orders outside the UK or to pay by credit card or PayPal, go to our website: www.international-brigades.org.uk/merchandise.php where there are also other items listed for sale.

Plus music from **na-mara** from 2.30pm at Camel & Artichoke, 121 Lower Marsh St, SE1 7AE



Saturday 4 July 2015 International Brigade Memorial Jubilee Gardens, South Bank, London Assemble 12.30pm

FRANCESCA BEARD



OWEN JONES



KARL LEWKOWICZ



EWAN McLENNAN



THIS MEMORIAL UNVEILED BY
MICHAEL FOOT 5TH OCTOBER
1985 WAS MADE POSSIBLE BY
THE SUPPORT OF MANY
DEMOCRATIC ORGANISATIONS
INDIVIDUALS AND THE
GREATER LONDON COUNCIL

Photo: Andrew Ward

Commemorate and celebrate the anti-fascist



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www.international-brigades.org.uk

INTERNATIONAL BRIGADES SPAIN 1936-39