

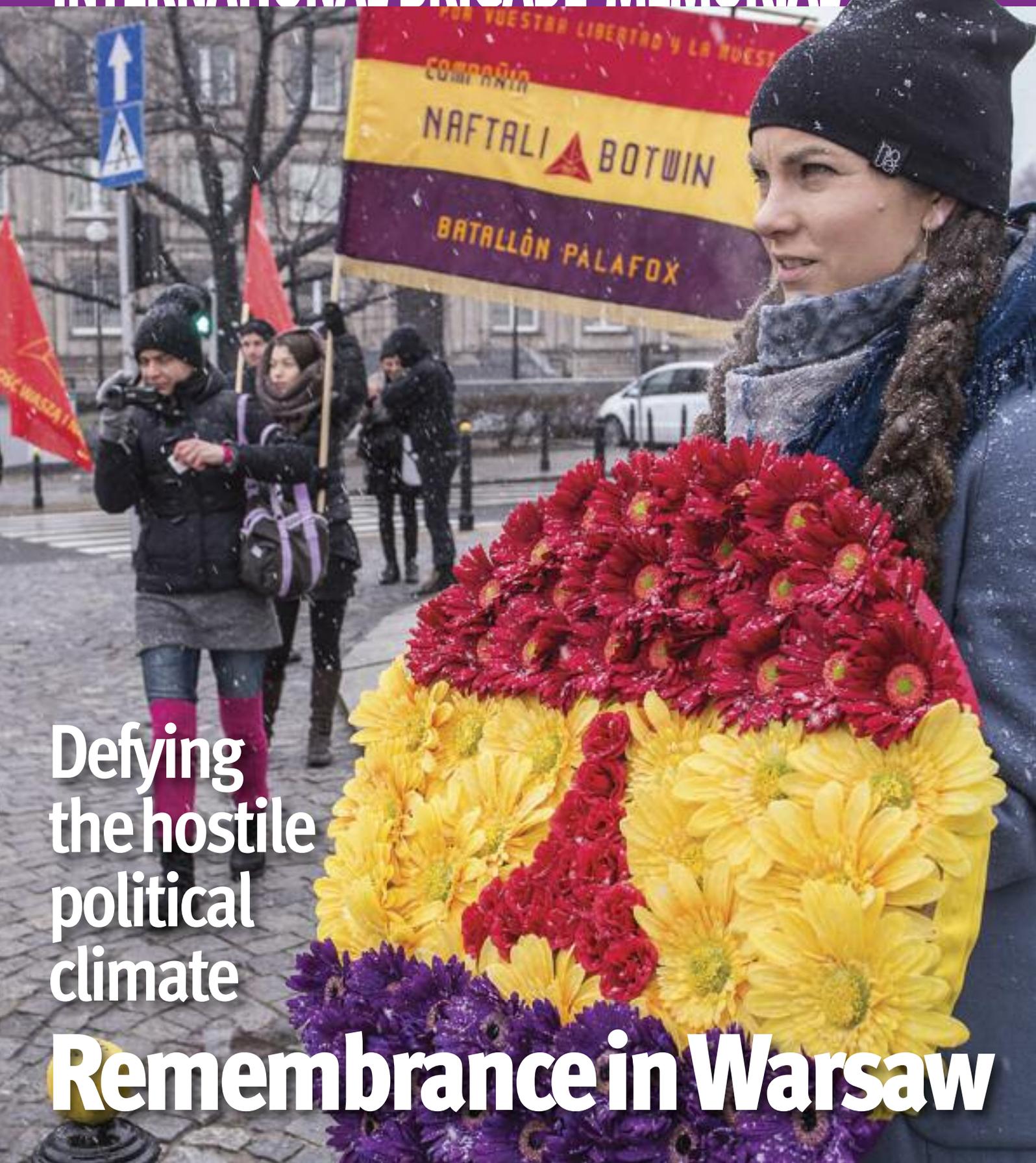


# IBMT Newsletter

[www.international-brigades.org.uk](http://www.international-brigades.org.uk)

Issue 42 / 2-2016

## INTERNATIONAL BRIGADE MEMORIAL TRUST



Defying  
the hostile  
political  
climate

# Remembrance in Warsaw

To you we speak, you numberless Englishmen,  
To remind you of the greatness still among you  
Created by these men who go from your towns  
To fight for peace, for liberty and for you."  
- Randall Swingler

Clem Beckett and Christopher Caudwell were such men. Moved by most Spaniards' determination to defend themselves against Franco's rising fascist army, they crossed the Pyrenees, like so many other volunteers that recognised the defence of Spanish democracy against fascism was their fight too.

'Dare Devil' Beckett, the rugged Speedway star, and Caudwell, the literary critic, poet and aeronautical expert, were considered unlikely friends; but a common cause brought them together and they died at their machine gun post covering their battalion's retreat at the Battle of Jarama in February 1937.

Commissioned by the IBMT, "Dare Devil Rides To Jarama" is a new play by Neil Gore that tells the story of the British and Irish volunteers at the beginning of the brutal Civil War in Spain, and captures the raw passions and emotions of idealism and despair, hope and anger, determination and fear, through powerful storytelling, stirring songs and poetry and compelling dance and movement.



TOWNSEND PRODUCTIONS [www.townsendproductions.org.uk](http://www.townsendproductions.org.uk)

# DARE DEVIL RIDES TO JARAMA

A new play by  
Neil Gore

Music Directed by  
John Kirkpatrick  
Designed by Mia Sanders  
Directed by Louise Townsend



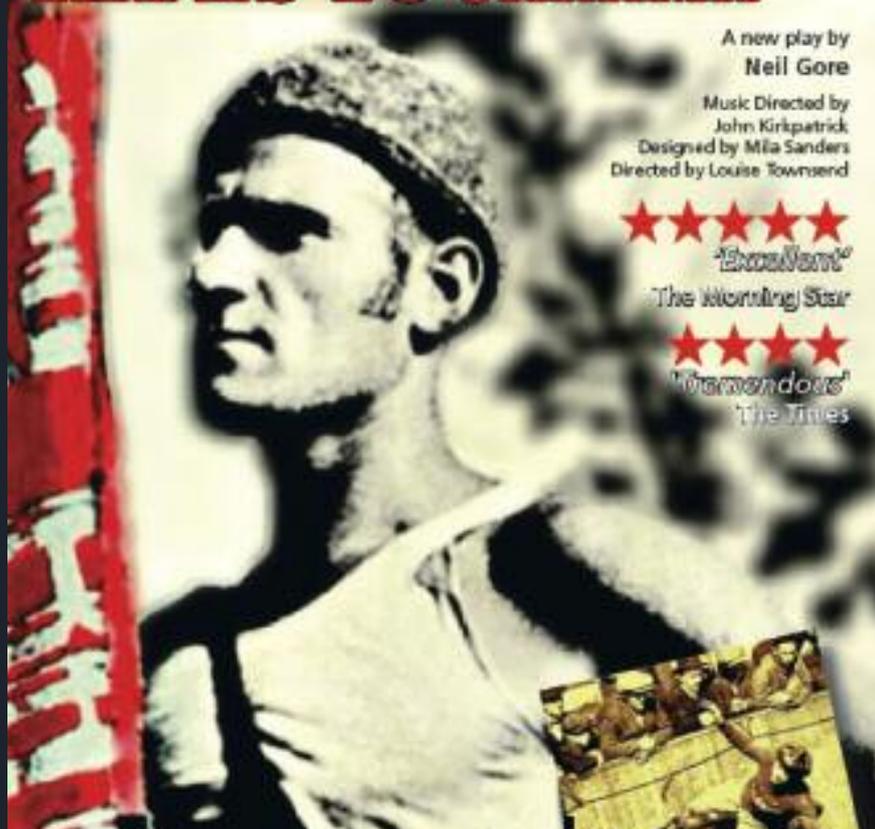
*'Excellent'*

*The Morning Star*



*'Magnificent'*

*The Times*



## TOURING AUTUMN 2016

For information about booking tickets for the tour:  
Please visit our home page [www.townsendproductions.org.uk](http://www.townsendproductions.org.uk)

### SEPTEMBER

24 The Place Bedford  
26 - 1 Oct Harrogate Theatre

### OCTOBER

4 Loganlea Miners Welfare  
6-7 The Lowry Theatre Salford  
11 Guildhall Derby  
12 -16 Oldham Coliseum  
18-19 Castle Wellingborough  
20 Chilwell Arts Centre, Beeston  
21 The Lansdown Hall, Stroud  
22 The Seagull Lowestoft  
24 -29 Bussey Building Peckham  
30 Marx Memorial Library  
(excerpts and songs)

### NOVEMBER

1 Hertford Theatre  
2 Wedgwood Rooms Southsea  
3 Plough Arts, Great Torrington  
4 Drogheda Arts Centre  
5 Bridport Arts Centre  
7 Theatre Royal Margate  
10 Barnsley Civic



Clem  
Beckett

Christopher  
Caudwell



### NOVEMBER

12 Cast Doncaster  
13 Severn Theatre Shrewsbury  
14 -19 Lantern Theatre Sheffield  
21 - 26 Lantern Theatre Liverpool  
29 Lighthouse Poole

### DECEMBER

1 Square Chapel Halifax  
2 Hat Factory Luton  
3 Ruskin College Oxford



C. H. "DAREDEVIL" BECKETT, Oxford

## IBMT Newsletter

Issue no.42  
2-2016

## Cover story

Zuza Ziółkowska carries a wreath to lay at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier in Warsaw: page 7

## 3-9 News

Including a report from the IBMT's annual lecture day in Manchester on 12 March

## 10 Secretarial notes

Jim Jump writes

## 11-17 Features

- In search of a Hull Brigader
- Ellen Wilkinson and the Spanish Civil War
- A family mystery solved, thanks to the IBMT and Owen Jones
- The role played by the ILP in Spain
- Spanish Republican exiles and refugees in Britain in the 1940s

## 17 Can you help?

## 18 Obituaries

Delmer Berg, Luis Quesada

## 18 Letters

From Christina Elliott, Tom Sibley and Ross Bradshaw

## 19-21 Books

Including a collection of "lost" photos taken by Alec Wainman and a new study of the international communist movement and the Spanish Civil War

## 22 What's on

The IBMT Newsletter is published three times a year and is sent free to all members. Back numbers can be downloaded from the IBMT website on [www.international-brigades.org.uk/newsletter.htm]. All content is the copyright © of the IBMT and credited contributors and cannot be reproduced without written permission.

## Editor

Jim Jump  
37a Clerkenwell Green, London EC1R 0DU  
020 7253 8748  
secretary@international-brigades.org.uk

## International Brigade Memorial Trust

www.international-brigades.org.uk

Registered charity no. 1094928



# Dates announced for IBMT-backed play about Beckett and Caudwell

The IBMT-commissioned play about the International Brigades, "Dare Devil Rides to Jarama", will be premiered on 24 September in Bedford at the start of a tour around theatres in Britain that will run until 3 December.

Venues and dates for a busy autumn programme of 45 performances have now been announced (see notice on left). A second leg of tour dates will commence early in 2017.

"Dare Devil Rides to Jarama" is centred on the contrasting lives of International Brigaders Clem Beckett and Christopher Caudwell. Beckett was a Lancashire blacksmith and famous star of the speedway track, while Caudwell was a renowned writer, poet and Marxist philosopher.

They were killed together at Jarama, having become friends and comrades as members of the British Battalion's machine-gun company.

Written by Neil Gore and produced by Townsend Productions, the play will be performed during the 80th anniversaries of the for-

mation of the International Brigades in October 1936 and the Battle of Jarama in February 1937.

Louise Townsend of Townsend Productions says the play will shed light on the political and social world of the 1930s and all that inspired

**"The play will commemorate and celebrate the contribution and sacrifice of the volunteer International Brigades..."**

and confronted the Brigaders on their journeys to Spain.

She adds: "The play will commemorate and celebrate the contribution and sacrifice of the volunteer International Brigades from all over the world, including 2,500 from Britain and Ireland, who recognised that the defence of Spanish democracy against fascism was their fight too."

## Glasgow to host Frank Casey's sculpture tribute Merchant seafarers to be honoured on the Clyde

By Ronnie Moran

Glasgow City Council has identified a site for the memorial for seafarers who ran the blockade of Spanish Republican ports. It is on the Clyde walkway on the west side of the Jamaica Street Bridge. This is not far from the La Pasionaria memorial to the International Brigades and coincidentally across the road from the site of the old Glasgow "Pool" (hiring hall) building that the Merchant Navy operated from.

The campaign to get a site for this memorial has been a long one. Sculptor Frank Casey first approached the RMT Glasgow Shipping Branch when I was Branch Secretary some 14 or 15 years ago.

The campaign gathered pace three years ago when I attended a ceremony in Glasgow city chambers to commemorate the war dead of Britain's Merchant Navy. The commemoration was the first of its kind in Glasgow and had been organised by Baillie Nina Baker. She has a nautical background, having been a deck officer in the Merchant Navy and had taught at Glasgow Nautical College.

Nina, a Green Party councillor, was on the city planning committee and when I talked about

*Continued overleaf*



Part of the maquette for Frank Casey's sculpture. The model for the background sketch is Frank's grandson Sean Quinn.



**CHEERING:** Around the IBMT's North West banner on Suicide Hill.

## Jarama event 'even bigger' next year

By Mark Hoskisson

On Friday and Saturday 19-20 February the courage of the International Brigades to defend Madrid at the Battle of Jarama was commemorated by IBMT supporters in Spain.

Together with our Spanish brothers and sisters of the AABI International Brigades friendship group, three events saw the banners of British trade unions united with those of the Spanish Republic in a magnificent display of solidarity and internationalism.

At Tarancón, on the Friday, the memorial to the Scottish volunteers – authorised by the socialist mayor of the town – was the site of a moving tribute led by the family of William Crawford, who fell in the battle

to defend democracy. Poems, songs, speeches and a bagpipe lament featured in the ceremony that commemorated both the International Brigades and the Spanish victims of Franco's brutal reign.

On Saturday one delegation visited the positions of the Polish Dombrowski Battalion of volunteers who held the line at Jarama against the fascist advance.

### Paid respects

Another delegation paid its respects to the British and Irish Brigadiers who fought and died on Suicide Hill and who rallied, under the leadership of Frank Ryan, to form an unbreakable line of defence.

At the monument to the International Brigades where

that great rally took place, over 100 people listened to speeches from Kevan Nelson, the North West Regional Secretary of Unison, and Charles Jepson of the IBMT Executive Committee.

The delegations from Unite, ASLEF, Unison, the NUT and other unions told IBMT members to prepare for an even bigger delegation from the trade union movement next year – the 80th anniversary of the battle.

The gathering ended with a tumultuous rendition of "The Internationale" and was followed by a social gathering with comrades from all over the world in nearby Morata.

Mark Hoskisson is an IBMT and Unite member from Liverpool.

## Seafarers' memorial

From previous page

the blockade runners' memorial she was enthusiastic. The Spanish Civil War was something she had always had a special interest in. Since that meeting RMT Glasgow Shipping Branch, Frank and myself have been working with Nina and after three years we have a great result. We now have the formality of an application for planning permission.

The main parts of the memorial, a plaque with the Merchant Navy badge superimposed over a map of Spain, a description of the ships' mission

**A HEAVY TOLL:** British ships and seafarers trading with Republican Spain during the Spanish Civil War suffered serious casualties. A report published by the Republic's embassy in London in 1938 calculated that, between July 1936 and June 1938, 13 British merchant ships were sunk by enemy action, 51 others were bombed from the air, two were mined, five were attacked by submarines and 23 seized or detained by Franco's forces. Thirty-five British seamen had been killed in these attacks and nearly 50 badly injured. The Royal Navy also lost eight killed when in May 1937 the destroyer *HMS Hunter* struck a mine laid by Franco's navy south of Almería.

in taking much needed supplies to the Spanish Republican government and bringing back refugees, many of them orphans, along with a list of names of ships lost during this mission.

The other part is a figure left to the viewer's interpretation but called "the warning shout" by the sculptor (see photo on page 3). Both sections are complete and in Glasgow, stored in the basement of the Scottish TUC.

All that is required now is the building of a plinth to house the memorial. Once all this is done we can look forward to the unveiling ceremony.

Ronnie Moran is a member of the IBMT and RMT Glasgow Shipping Branch.

## Remembering Jack Brent



**SPEAKING:** Stuart Hyslop in front of the plaque on the former butcher's shop where Brent worked as a young man.

IBMT members and supporters in Dumfries marked the 10th anniversary of the unveiling of the plaque to Jack Brent in his home town of Whithorn on 24 February, reports Stuart Hyslop.

The event was arranged to coincide with the Battle of Jarama, in which Jack Brent was severely wounded by fascist machine-gun fire while rescuing a fallen comrade.

Brent – whose real name was Geordie Dickie – became the Secretary of the International Brigade Association after the war in Spain. He died aged 39.

The Whithorn gathering, at which a wreath was laid, was attended by union

representatives, local residents and a Dumfries and Galloway local councillor.

The commemoration consisted of several short speeches, the reciting by Ronnie Moran of RMT of the poem "Salud, Brigade – Salud!" and closed with an emotive reading by Sandra Trotter of the Dumfries Branch of the Communist Party of La Pasionaria's memorable address to the departing International Brigaders.

Copies of "Geordie's Story", the recent biography of Jack Brent written by his nephew John Dickie, were on display and the event was given favourable coverage in a number of the region's newspapers.

# Executed volunteer's signature on display alongside Picasso's 'Guernica'

## What's in a name on a pamphlet?

How did a pamphlet that was signed by a Scottish International Brigader come to be displayed in a Madrid art gallery alongside Picasso's "Guernica"?

This was the question that IBMT Scotland Secretary Mike Arnott asked the Reina Sofia Museum in Madrid after he noticed that a copy of the "Save Spain from Fascism" pamphlet in the exhibition carries the pencilled signature of James (Jimmy) Rutherford on its cover.

Rutherford was summarily executed after being captured in Aragon in the spring of 1938. He had also been taken prisoner at Jarama in February of the previous year, and a condition of his release in May 1937 was that he would not return to Spain.

On a visit to the museum in February, Arnott saw the signed pamphlet on display next to Picasso's masterpiece and along with other leaflets from around the world that were published during the Spanish Civil War.

### Wrote

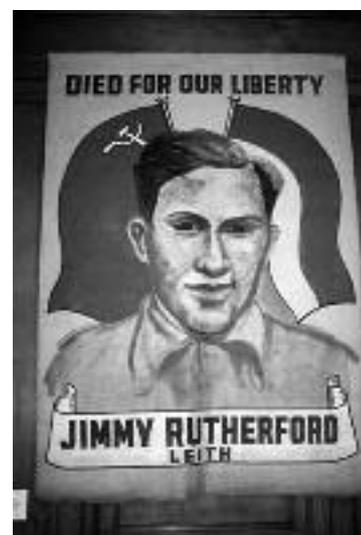
He promptly wrote to the Reina Sofia and received a reply from the museum saying that the pamphlet had been acquired at an auction in Barcelona in October 2013. There was no indication as to the identity of the seller.

"Save Spain from Fascism" was published by the Communist Party in 1936 and written by its General Secretary, Harry Pollitt.



LEFT: Copy of the pamphlet on show in Madrid at the Reina Sofia Museum.

RIGHT: Edinburgh City Council's People's Story Museum holds in its collection this banner portrait of Jimmy Rutherford, which is dated 1938, the year of his death in Spain.



Rutherford came from the fishing port of Newhaven, near Leith. After capture during the Battle of Jarama he was interrogated by Francoist official Alfonso Merry del Val and later released as part of a prisoner exchange. He returned to the UK, but travelled back to Spain in August 1937 to continue the fight.

He was captured again, at Calaceite on 31 March 1938, and sent to the prison camp at San Pedro de Cardeña near Burgos. Despite recognising the danger he was in, and changing

his name to James Small, he was recognised by del Val, and his fingerprints confirmed that he was indeed James Rutherford. He was executed by firing squad on 24 May 1938 at San Pedro de Cardeña, aged 20.

Arnott's letter to the museum asked: "It is difficult to see how your pamphlet could have belonged to anyone other than this James Rutherford and it would be important if we could establish if it was among his possessions when he was captured."

## Brigadista Spanish Civil War Ale

Brewed by Blackhill Brewery of County Durham for the International Brigade Memorial Trust and Hope Not Hate

Tasting notes: *Spanish oranges and lemons with a Spanish blossom honey flavour to balance and sweeten the citrus; brewed with Cascade Hops at 4.3%*

Order from <http://brigadistaale.co.uk>

You are History.  
You are Legend.

A special ale to commemorate the 80th anniversary of the Spanish Civil War

Proceeds from sales help pay for the work of the IBMT





**IN MANCHESTER:** Mike Wild, folk-singer and son of British Battalion Commander Sam Wild, performs at a well-attended commemoration at the International Brigade memorial (pictured) in Manchester Town Hall on 14 February. Along with wreath-laying there was more music from the Bolton Wood Street Clarion Choir.



**IN MÁLAGA:** A statue of Canadian doctor Norman Bethune was unveiled on 6 February on the Málaga-Almería road along which he and his ambulance unit saved countless lives in February 1937. Refugees fleeing the fascist capture of Málaga flooded along the road to Almería, while Franco's warships and airplanes bombed them mercilessly. Historian Linda Palfreeman said the memorial to Bethune was "a long time coming, but a wonderful tribute, nevertheless". She added: "Sadly, nothing of 65-year-old British man Sir George Young, whose ambulance unit also brought succour to many hundreds, if not thousands, of those same desperate refugees."



**IN WORTHING:** The Worthing Socialist Singers welcome attendees at a commemoration at the Labour Hall, where there is a plaque to the five men from Worthing who joined the International Brigades. Speakers included IBMT Secretary Jim Jump – whose father was one of the five – and IBMT Treasurer Manuel Moreno, who spoke about the Basque refugee children's homes in the town.

**IN ALICANTE:** A group of IBMT members visited Spanish Civil War sites in the Alicante area in February, including (pictured) the memorial to the British-registered *Stanbrook*, which rescued more than 2,600 Spanish Republican refugees at the end of the Spanish Civil War in March 1939 before the port fell to the advancing fascist forces. The group was hosted by the local Association for the Recovery of Historical Memory and the Labour International Branch which is active in the British community.



## In brief

### Progress in Newcastle

Newcastle City Council's Historical Environment Advisory Panel has given the go-ahead for an International Brigade memorial board within the grounds of the civic centre, reports Don Watson. It will complement a small plaque for the North East volunteers that was unveiled in 1989 but which is thought by IBMT supporters to be too vaguely worded and not prominent enough.

The new information board would list the names of all the Tyne and Wear Brigaders killed in Spain, some 30 in total, together with an explanatory text about the International Brigades and the Spanish Civil War.

The IBMT has pledged £500 towards the cost of the board and its installation, and so far a similar amount has been raised from regional trade unions and the Co-op. More unions and constituency Labour parties are also being approached.

To support this initiative contact Don Watson: [donwatson@phonecoop.coop].

### New talks on Oxford plan

Plans for a memorial in Oxford city centre have been temporarily halted following complaints by several local residents during the council's planning application process.

The application has been suspended pending a new meeting between IBMT representatives and council officers and the ruling Labour group, reports Colin Carritt, secretary of the IBMT group organising the raising of the memorial.

He adds: "We believe there is continued support from the council, although it remains to be seen whether the chosen location in St Giles will be sustained."

Meanwhile, fund-raising for the memorial continues, and £450 was raised on 15 March at a tapas supper at the Al-Andalus restaurant in Oxford. Diners were addressed by IBMT Patron Rodney Bickerstaffe, accompanied by historian and IBMT Chair Richard Baxell.

See [www.sustainablewoodstock.co.uk/ibmt.html] for the latest news about the Oxford memorial. "No Other Way: Oxfordshire and the Spanish Civil War 1936-39" by Chris Farman, Valery Rose and Liz Woolley has been reprinted and can be ordered for £7 plus £3 p&p from John Haywood: [a.j.haywood@hotmail.co.uk] tel: 07785 235 715.

### Pledge for Gibraltar plaque

Gibraltar Chief Minister Fabian Picardo has announced that a plaque to commemorate the Gibraltarians who fought and died fighting for the Spanish Republic will be put up in the parliament lobby alongside memorials honouring those who died in the world wars.

He made this pledge at a symposium organised by Unite the Union on 17 February in Gibraltar. Leaders of Spain's biggest union federations also took part in the event. Cándido

*Continued on page 9*



Zuza Ziółkowska Hercberg (second from right) and friends gather in front of Warsaw's Tomb of the Unknown Soldier.



Actor Agata Różyca reads the Władysław Broniewski poem "Glory and Dynamite" about the defence of Madrid while Zuza Ziółkowska Hercberg (in front of wreath) looks on.

# Poles honour their 'unknown soldiers'

By Jim Jump

A tribute to Poland's officially "forgotten" International Brigaders was organised on 1 March at Warsaw's Tomb of the Unknown Soldier by the grand-daughter of one of the country's volunteers who fought in Spain.

Zuza Ziółkowska Hercberg led the commemoration and laid a wreath at the memorial. Other participants carried Spanish Republican flags and standards of the Polish Dombrowski and Palafox Battalions, including the latter's Jewish Naftali Botwin Company.

In doing so they defied not just the pouring rain on the day – but also an officially-sanctioned climate of opinion that is hostile to the International Brigades and those on the left who opposed fascism in the 1930s.

Memorials to the International Brigades in Poland have been removed in recent years or are under threat because of this prevailing anti-communist political culture.

In the 1990s the inscriptions remembering the "Dombrowskis" were erased from the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier and other monuments in Warsaw. According to the Institute of National Remembrance, these volunteers had "served the interests of Stalin in Spain".

"There is now a significant gap in the names of battles on the memorial," says Ziółkowska Hercberg, who is a postgraduate student at the Academy of Fine Arts in Warsaw. "This shows how public memory can be disrupted. My action aimed at restoring the pluralistic nature of history."

Dedicating her "art action" to "the volunteers for liberty, members of the XIII International Brigade, the Dombrowskis", Zuza said afterwards that she had set out to demonstrate how memorials are an ideological construct and thus susceptible to political influence.

She wanted to "seize the public space and insist that the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier

should be a memorial of the collective history of the Polish people, fighting for freedom and independence on different fronts of war, and not be dependent on changes in the current political mood".

The Dombrowskis, insists Zuza, fought for the freedom of Europe during its first confrontation with fascism, and then for the independence of Poland on many fronts.

She adds: "I want to recall those people who fought under the banner 'For your freedom and ours'. We connect to the past through what we talk about – I want to talk about an idea linking the Polish Legions led by Tadeusz Kościuszko in the 18th century and the International Brigades in the 1930s."

The artist created a tricolor wreath, the flowers of which were made into the Spanish Republican flag and the symbol of the International Brigades.

The banner of the Naftali Botwin Company of the Palafox Battalion was copied from the original stored in the archives of the Jewish Historical Institute in Warsaw, she explains. The Adam Mickiewicz Battalion banner was recreated from contemporary material dealing with the civil war in Spain.

Marching from the Marshal Józef Piłsudski memorial to the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier, participants handed out leaflets describing how family memory had inspired Ziółkowska Hercberg to organise the event.

Zuza told the *IBMT Newsletter*: "My grandfather was born in 1917 in Poland as Gershom Hercberg. During the

Spanish Civil War he bore that name. Then – as many other Jews did at that time – he changed his name to Gieniek Ziółkowski.

"After the war in Spain he was in several concentration camps in France and north Africa. He returned to Poland in 1944 and lived the rest of his life with his new name. I was born with the new surname, until I discovered family stories and started to use both surnames."

Organising the ceremony on 1 March had not been easy, Zuza admits. "But I'm happy because my action proved that you can pay tribute to

***"The only thing I got exposed to was criticism from certain quarters and insulting messages on the internet. But something has changed – now people have started to talk more about the Dombrowskis."***

volunteers of the Internationale Brigades – and no-one will kill you as a result! The only thing I got exposed to was criticism from certain quarters and insulting messages on the internet. But something has changed – now people have started to talk more about the Dombrowskis."

Last summer the IBMT was one of several groups to protest to the Warsaw city authorities over plans to change the name of a street named after the Dombrowski Battalion. The move was quietly shelved following international protests and a campaign led by local anti-fascists.

For Zuza Ziółkowska Hercberg's video of this year's Warsaw event, see [<https://vimeo.com/159078445>].



**ERASED:** The Tomb of the Unknown Soldier formerly listed battles in the Spanish Civil War.



Main speakers at the IBMT conference, from left: Paul Preston, Helen Graham, Richard Baxell, Linda Palfreeman and Sylvia Martin.



Part of the audience at the Manchester Conference Centre.

## IBMT's annual conference day shines spotlight on... Four women whose lives were defined by war in Spain

By Pauline Fraser

This year's Len Crome Memorial Conference highlighted a diverse and truly international quartet of women united by the common cause of Spain: Margaret Michaelis, originally from Poland, the Australian Aileen Palmer, Fernanda Jacobsen from Scotland and, towering over them all, from Spain itself, La Pasionaria, Dolores Ibárruri.

Held in the Manchester Conference Centre on 12 March, the IBMT's annual conference, titled "Women and the Spanish Civil War", was chaired by Richard Baxell, historian of the International Brigades and the IBMT Chair.

Speaking to a packed audience, IBMT Patron Professor Peter Crome introduced the day with a selection of photos illustrating the life of his father, Dr Len Crome. The latter's enormous contribution to the medical services in Spain was later highlighted by two of the speakers.

### Dolores Ibárruri

Professor Paul Preston's "Pasionaria of Steel" talk depicted an outstanding leader, Dolores Ibárruri. As warrior and mother-figure of the Spanish people, she had empathy with the poor and oppressed, while as a political leader she showed the steely determination, courage and strength that gave the people hope.

One of the greatest of orators, La Pasionaria's famous phrases, "Better to die on your feet, than live on your knees", "If the Spanish people are defeated, you will be next" and, most famous of all, "¡No pasarán!" will live on wherever there is a battle to be won against fascism and inhumanity.

It is difficult to imagine Paul Preston lost for words, but on the few occasions when he was

honoured to meet La Pasionaria, such was the effect she had on him, he confessed. "In her eighties, she was the most beautiful woman I had ever met," he said.

### Margaret Michaelis

Professor Helen Graham's subject, Margaret Michaelis, was a complete unknown to most of the audience. She does not figure with the greats of Spanish Civil War photography such as Robert Capa and Gerda Taro.

Michaelis worked for the Catalan Generalitat (government), taking scenes of life behind the lines, such as evacuated children in Barcelona, cutting-edge co-educational schools and home front mobilisation. She helped with what Helen Graham called "the psychological conscription of people into the war effort" and also photographed the US anarchist Emma Goldman during her tour of the front.

### Aileen Palmer

Aileen Palmer's poetry is relatively well known, but Dr Sylvia Martin, also Australian, revealed the exemplary contribution she made to the administration of the medical services provided by the British volunteers. Dr Sinclair-Loutit, who headed up the first hospital at Grañén, said she was "terrific, a quiet, indefatigable worker".

Palmer's skills as a linguist were in high demand. She worked in the battlefield hospitals at Brunete and Teruel. She became secretary to Len Crome, whom she described as a "tall, genial, comforting figure", "highly efficient" and with a "devastating irreverence for bureaucracy".

She wanted to be where the need was greatest. Offered a desk job in Barcelona, Palmer

left for southern France to help the refugees, then to London, where she worked throughout the Blitz as an ambulance driver in the East End.

Called back to Australia after the war to tend her sick mother, she found it difficult to fit into the comfortable life there. "Spain stands out in my life like a beacon light," she wrote. Mental health problems were to dog her for the rest of her life.

Ironically, Margaret Michaelis was at the same time to find refuge in Australia, but not from the demons of war that also led to her mental illness.

### Fernanda Jacobsen

Linda Palfreeman subtitled her talk on Fernanda Jacobsen, colourful commander of the Scottish Ambulance Unit, "Samaritan or Spy?".

Controversy has dogged the history of the SAU over the decision that it should be entirely non-political and should give medical aid to whoever was in need.

Under Fernanda's direction, the definition of aid was extended from medical assistance to the provision of soup and porridge kitchens to the starving people of Madrid.

She worked with a somewhat shady character called Christopher Lance, who allegedly used the unit to smuggle Franco sympathisers out of Madrid. When Madrid was taken by Franco, Fernanda risked further controversy by staying on to continue her work.

Those present found this year's Len Crome conference day interesting and stimulating – a unique contribution to Manchester's celebrations of International Women's Day.

At the end of the lunch interval Lynn Collins, TUC North West Regional Secretary, spoke about the campaign to get a statue erected to Sylvia Pankhurst.

A tireless anti-fascist campaigner, Sylvia championed the cause of Abyssinia during the savage war waged against that country by Mussolini's fascist troops some two years before the fascists and far right in Spain staged their coup against their elected government.

Pauline Fraser is an IBMT Trustee.

# In brief

From page 6

Méndez of the UGT praised Gibraltar's role in giving shelter to up to 10,000 refugees. Ignacio Fernández Toxo from Comisiones Obreras won loud applause when he said the Rock had shown compassion that was an example to the world, especially today when millions of Syrian refugees were washing up on Europe's shores.

## Launch of IB Cymru

IBMT members are prominent among a group of International Brigade enthusiasts in Wales who have set up an organisation called IB Cymru. Their stated aim is "to forge links with social, community and trade union groups to educate the public about the important role of Welsh International Brigaders and the contribution of Welsh communities to the Spanish Civil War". IB Cymru intends raising funds for activities centred on the IBMT's 2017 Annual General Meeting which, Welsh activists hope, will take place in Cardiff. Contact: [ibcymru@yahoo.com].

## Protest over name-change in Croatia



The AABI International Brigades friendship group in Spain is urging a Europe-wide campaign to restore the name of a

village square in Croatia previously named after local International Brigader Dragutin Bilić (pictured). The AABI wants protests to be made to the Tisno regional authorities over the removal of Bilić's name from the square in his native village of Betina on the Dalmatian coast.

Dragutin Bilić (1907-1937) was one of 1,500 Croat volunteers in the International Brigades. He died near Teruel in June 1937. Betina's main square was named Square of the Fighter in Spain Dragutin Bilić (see sign above) during the postwar communist government of Yugoslavia.

The AABI comments: "The hard right in Croatia is on the rise and the local town council has now removed Bilić's name. We believe that it is possible to restore the name of the square if this initiative wins international support."

Email Tisno mayor Ivan Klarin: [opcina@tisno.hr] and [mestrov@tisno.hr] or Facebook Messenger: [www.facebook.com/ivan.klarin.9?fref=ts].

## ALBA award for 2016

The Abraham Lincoln Brigade Archives in the US has presented its annual \$100,000 ALBA/Puffin Award for Human Rights Activism to journalists Lydia Cacho and Jeremy Scahill. The citation states: "Working on both sides of the volatile Mexico-US border, Lydia Cacho and Jeremy Scahill have dedicated their careers to exposing the corruption, violence and abuse of power which go routinely unchallenged in the mainstream media." The prize is granted in honour of the International Brigades in order to "connect their inspiring legacy with contemporary causes".

**CASPE:** Three unidentified International Brigaders were buried in the municipal cemetery of Caspe on 26 March. Their remains had been found on nearby Hill 238, the site of fighting in March 1938 involving Franco-Belge units during the Republican retreat through Aragon. The ceremony was organised by the local historical memory group, Asociación Bajoaragonesa de Agitación y Propaganda.



**IN IRELAND:** An image of Brigader Bob Doyle looks on (left) in Dublin on 13 February as IBMT Ireland Secretary Manus O'Riordan (on right) and Harry Owens of the Friends of the International Brigades in Ireland speak on the centenary of Doyle's birth. At the Holocaust Memorial Day commemoration in Dublin on 24 January (centre), Manus O'Riordan joins Patricia King, General Secretary of the Irish Congress of Trade Unions, in lighting candles in memory of the political victims. Pictured (right) in Glasnevin Cemetery, Dublin, at the rededication of the refurbished tombstone of Brigader Frank Ryan on 13 February are his grand-niece, Charlotte Ryan Wetton, and Deputy Lord Mayor of Dublin Cieran Perry.

**GUADALAJARA:** Setting off on 12 March to hike across the battlefield near Guadalajara, where Franco's attempt to encircle Madrid in March 1937 was thwarted by Republican forces. The battle saw the Garibaldi Battalion of the International Brigades pitched against Italian armoured divisions sent by Mussolini to help Franco.



**CÓRDOBA FRONT:** IBMT President Marlene Sidaway addresses a gathering in the village of Valsequillo on 8 April during a tour of battlefields near Córdoba, where the International Brigades saw action in December 1936. Organised by the Spanish AABI International Brigades memorial group, the tour visited, among other places, Lopera, scene of a battle in which poet John Cornford and writer Ralph Fox were killed. There is a memorial to them in the village, next to which a commemoration was held as part of the tour. As well as at Valsequillo, memorial plaques were also unveiled at Belalcázar and La Granjuela.



*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*

**International Brigade Memorial Trust**

37a Clerkenwell Green  
London EC1R 0DU  
020 7253 8748  
www.international-brigades.org.uk

**Email**

enquiries@international-brigades.org.uk

**President**

Marlene Sidaway  
president@international-brigades.org.uk

**Chair**

Richard Baxell  
chair@international-brigades.org.uk

**Secretary**

Jim Jump  
secretary@international-brigades.org.uk

**Treasurer**

Manuel Moreno  
treasurer@international-brigades.org.uk

**Scotland Secretary**

Mike Arnott  
scotland@international-brigades.org.uk

**Membership Secretary**

Mary Greening  
memsec@international-brigades.org.uk

**Merchandise Officer**

Chris Hall  
merchandise@international-brigades.org.uk

**Film Coordinator**

Marshall Mateer  
film@international-brigades.org.uk

**Ireland Secretary**

Manus O'Riordan  
mmanusoriordan@gmail.com

**Education Officer**

Richard Thorpe  
media@international-brigades.org.uk

**Other Executive Committee members**

Pauline Fraser, Charles Jepson, Hilary Jones, Dolores Long, Duncan Longstaff, Danny Payne

**Founding Chair:** Professor Paul Preston

**Patrons:** Rodney Bickerstaffe, Professor Peter Crome, Hywel Francis, Professor Helen Graham, Ken Livingstone, Len McCluskey, Christy Moore, Jack O'Connor, Maxine Peake, Baroness Royall of Blaisdon, Mick Whelan

**Registered charity no.** 1094928

**facebook.com/groups/7123291063**

**twitter.com/IBMT\_SCW**

**youtube.com/user/IBMTnews**

**flickr.com/photos/ibmt**

## SECRETARIAL NOTES



Clean-up time yet again at the International Brigade memorial in Madrid.

### Making sense of Madrid memorial attacks

The imposing International Brigade memorial in Madrid's University City is sadly a regular target for vandals who deface it with neo-fascist slogans and insults to the volunteers and to the left in general.

The attacks have become so frequent that the outrage that first greeted them is mixed now with a knowing shrug and renewed determination by our friends in the Spanish capital to restore the memorial – which was unveiled in 2011 – to its proper condition.

Indeed, we can probably draw some comfort from this state of affairs. First, the fact that the memorial is a target for Spain's far-right underlines how resonant and relevant the legacy of the volunteers remains today. Secondly, it is heartening to see that there is never any shortage of helpers who immediately clean up the monument.

Our friends in Spain remind us that the metal

monolith has already withstood threats of demolition from the formerly right-wing Madrid city authorities. Graffiti and defacing with paint will certainly not deter them from preserving this important memorial to those who fought against fascism and to defend democracy.

### 1,000 is the target

It's satisfying to report that IBMT membership has reached record levels. The total, including individual members and 52 affiliated organisations (mainly unions and union branches), stood at 952 at the end of last year.

The figures were reported to the February meeting of the IBMT's Executive Committee, with everyone present hoping that we can cross the 1,000 threshold by 31 December this year.

So, thank you to everyone for your continued support – and if you haven't paid your 2016 subscription yet, please do so straight away. See details on page 15.

### Mick Whelan joins our team of Patrons

The IBMT is delighted to announce that Mick Whelan (right) has agreed to become one of our Patrons.

Mick is the General Secretary of the train drivers' union ASLEF, which has long been one of the IBMT's staunchest supporters in the trade union movement.

He said he was "deeply honoured" to accept our Executive Committee's invitation to be an IBMT Patron, having been a member of the Executive Committee itself since 2012 until earlier this year. We greatly value the help and influence that our team of Patrons bring to the IBMT's work. Mick's inclusion can only strengthen that support.

We're also pleased to note that Mick has this year been re-elected to serve a further five-year term as the ASLEF General Secretary.



**Jim Jump**

secretary@international-brigades.org.uk



**IN SESSION:** Meet the IBMT Executive Committee, seen here on 6 February at the Marx Memorial Library in London. Pictured clockwise from left are Pauline Fraser, Dolores Long, Mike Arnott, Marlene Sidaway (President), Chris Hall, Danny Payne, Charles Jepson, Hilary Jones, Manus O'Riordan, Duncan Longstaff, Jim Jump (Secretary) and Richard Baxell (Chair). Hidden from view are Mary Greening, Manuel Moreno (Treasurer) and co-opted members Marshall Mateer and Richard Thorpe.

“Midnight one Friday in January 1937 found me and four more Yorkshire comrades boarding a train at Sheffield bound for London on the first leg of our journey to Spain...”

So begins “Pounded Earth”, Tommy James’s account of his time as a volunteer in the International Brigades fighting the fascists in the Spanish Civil War.

One of the men on that train with Tommy was Jack Atkinson, a lorry driver from Hull. An only child, his father having died in the trenches, Jack had told his mother he was going to Spain to drive ambulances, but I doubt she believed him. Jack despised fascists and had been present at Corporation Fields, when Hull’s dockworkers ran Mosley and his Blackshirts out of town in short order. It was Jack I wanted to find.

When I started writing songs for what became my “¡No Pasarán!” album, I began by reading books, as many as I could find, hoping to put flesh on the bones of what I knew of the war and try to bring it to life. What I didn’t know then was that history was closer than I knew. My friend Giles Stevens contacted me and told me his great uncle had fought and would I like to know more. I said yes immediately.

Giles sent me his copy of Tommy James’s book and a letter in which he painted a picture of Jack, a giant of a man, quiet by nature but not a man to cross if his colour was up. He drove lorries before power-steering, see, and could hurl an iron barstool further than most could lob a cricket ball. He’d lost a finger and, to compensate, had a unique way of firing a rifle. No less effective, but hardly the stuff of strict military discipline.

He loved fruit-cake, and his mother had baked him one and set it in the pantry for his triumphant return. It was still there when she

**“Jack was an ordinary bloke whose politics were his life, his conviction unwavering. I loved him instantly.”**

died half a century later. She had never allowed herself to accept her only son had gone.

Jack was an ordinary bloke whose politics were his life, his conviction unwavering. I loved him instantly.

Besides Tommy and Jack, the other men in that railway carriage were a mystery. One is referred to



IBMT supporters in Hull held a commemoration on 19 February at the International Brigade plaque in the Guildhall. Afterwards they agreed to campaign for a more substantial memorial to the local volunteers.



Joe Solo by the International Brigade plaque in Hull’s Guildhall.

**Singer-songwriter JOE SOLO describes how finding out about Jack Atkinson and the other International Brigade volunteers from Hull inspired him to make his “¡No Pasarán!” album.**

## Musical journey in search of Hull volunteer Jack Atkinson

as “Arnold, a comrade from Leeds” and the other two are unnamed. Using a touch of artistic licence I called them Harry Jones and Bill Palmer, created a back-story for them, and began to write.

The songs came thick and fast. Once I knew who these men were and where they had been, it was a case of closing my eyes, pulling on their boots, and taking a few steps into the unknown.

What had they seen? Well, the books can tell you what had unfolded before them. How would they process that, rationalise it? That is different for everyone, though from survivors’ accounts you see common threads. Would it be fear, or determination which gripped them, or both?

The voice had to be an authentic one, otherwise who is going to believe what they are being told? The narrator has to earn the trust of the listener; if he can’t do that then the cause is lost. These are all concerns when writing in the first person about people from the past. Fortunately, Jack was such a powerful presence throughout the process it was as if he were writing it himself and all I had to do was make it rhyme.

I tried to cover as much ground as I could so as to do the story justice, but, in reality, Jack was killed at Jarama in February 1937 and Tommy returned to the UK after Brunete in July later that year, so I don’t cover the entire war. Hopefully though, the songs paint a picture of friendship, conviction and how our deeds live on long after we are dust.

Sadly, before I had finished the record, my friend Giles passed away. I didn’t get the chance to play him these songs and show him what had grown from his letter and the



**FREE CDs:** Joe Solo has generously donated 50 copies of his CD “¡No Pasarán!” to give away free to IBMT members. Anyone wanting a copy should send their name and address to: [secretary@international-brigades.org.uk] or to: IBMT, 37a Clerkenwell Green, London EC1R 0DU by 6 June, when 50 names will be pulled out of a hat. For more about Joe Solo see [www.joesolomusic.com].

great uncle who cast such a long shadow.

Playing them live I have been heartened by the numbers of people telling me they had no idea about the International Brigades and the cause they had given their lives for, and who are now reading and learning about what I consider to be the bravest single act of the 20th century – to give up your family, your home, your job to risk your life, not because your government told you

**“Once I knew who these men were ... it was a case of closing my eyes, pulling on their boots, and taking a few steps out into the unknown.”**

to, but because your conscience did. That is an incredible thing.

So I dropped in to the Guildhall in Hull to pay my respects to the eight men from the city who made the trip to Spain, and to the four who never came home. I stood before the memorial and thought for a minute about how the letters which form a man’s name tell nothing of the story of his life, and how I hope I have done something to redress that.

Jack Atkinson – a simple name, easily forgotten, easily ignored, yet every time I sing his song I feel his ghost creep up through the soles of my shoes and take me over screaming: the dead walk among us; their deeds pave the paths on which we walk. It is our job to live up to them.

# ‘Red Ellen’ and the Spanish Civil War

In November 1934 “Red” Ellen Wilkinson visited Spain with Lord Listowel as a representative of the Relief Committee for the Victims of Fascism, a communist-front organisation.

The visit, Ellen’s first to Spain, had been orchestrated by Otto Katz, a Czech communist secret agent who later became the controller of Soviet propaganda and spymaster in Western Europe. A month beforehand, a socialist republic had been founded at Oviedo, Asturias, but troops under General Franco were brought in from north Africa to overthrow it.

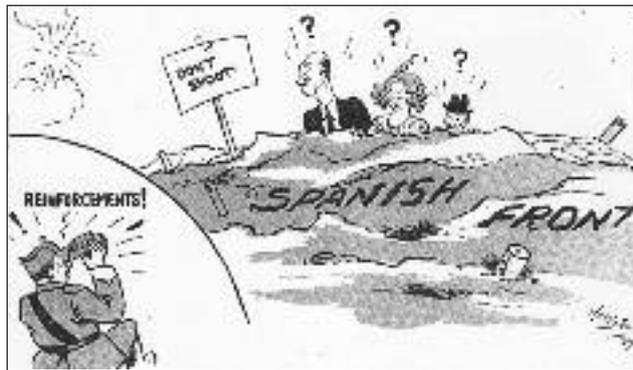
Ellen reported that army repression had been brutal and there had been victimisation on a terrible scale: prisoners were tortured, workers were imprisoned and the socialist press censored. Moorish troops, “maddened with drink had been let loose in the first terrible days”, doing things that no Spanish soldier would dare do.

Soon after Wilkinson and Listowel arrived they were bundled into a car “for protection” by the Francoists and driven to the Spanish border. Ellen insisted that they had been kidnapped.

In 1936 her support for Spanish socialists was further tested during the Spanish Civil War. Ellen, now the Labour MP for Jarrow, believed, as with others on the left, that the civil war was part of an international struggle against fascism and argued that military help should be given to defend the Spanish government. British Tory prime ministers, first Stanley Baldwin and, from May 1937, Neville Chamberlain, fearing that the civil war might precipitate a European war, hid behind the principle of non-intervention. To their discredit, the TUC and initially the Labour leadership agreed.

In April 1937, in another visit organised by Otto Katz, Ellen travelled to Spain with a cross-party section of women, Eleanor Rathbone, the Duchess of Atholl and Dame Rachel Crowdy. In Madrid she reported that “shells from rebel six inch guns, smashing in the street outside, tearing through the roof of a theatre, blew mangled bodies of women and children” through the doorway of

**Ellen Wilkinson (1891-1947) was a trade union organiser, campaigner for women’s votes and founder member of the Communist Party before becoming a Labour MP and Minister of Education in Clement Attlee’s 1945 Labour government. In the 1930s she took up the cause of the Spanish Republic, as her biographer, PAULA BARTLEY, describes here.**



*Birmingham Gazette cartoon lampooning the visit made by Ellen Wilkinson and Clement Attlee to Spain.*

the hotel where she was lunching with the other members of the delegation. Their car was standing nearby. Before they could drive away, the body of one of the victims had to be wiped off it.

The four women returned with a new commitment not only to organise relief schemes but to convince the British government that Franco and his army were being assisted by German and Italian forces. One of their notable successes was persuading the government to allow nearly 4,000 children from the Basque Country to come to Britain as refugees. Ellen was also successful in getting her trade union, the NUDAW shopworkers’ union, to raise a voluntary levy for a period of three months to help finance the initiative. Soon people were calling Ellen the “pocket Pasionaria”.

Shortly after Ellen’s return from Spain, the cultural capital of the Basque population – Guernica – was destroyed in one afternoon by the

bombing of the German airforce. On Thursday 8 May, identifying with the fate of the Republicans and frustrated by Parliament’s reluctance to do anything to help, Ellen broke down and sobbed during a debate on Spain in the House of Commons. The bombing of Guernica changed the Labour Party’s attitude towards the Spanish government. It denounced the bombing as an “outrage upon humanity, as a violation of the principles of civilisation, and a manifestation of the merciless and inhuman spirit” of the fascists.

At the next Labour Party conference Ellen’s analysis of the situation in Spain was, at last, accepted. The Labour Party reversed its policy, advocated supplying arms to the Republic and organised a series of mass demonstrations in support of the Spanish government. In that same month, October 1937, Labour also set up a Spain Campaign Committee to further its aims.



*Left: Ellen at home in the 1940s – with pictures of a Spanish bullfight on her wall.*



*Right: Pamphlet written by Wilkinson and others on their return from Spain.*

Ellen, along with William Gillies, was elected Joint Secretary.

The committee immediately organised an intensive publicity campaign: public meetings and demonstrations were held; letters and telegrams were sent to MPs and to the government; the press was bombarded with propaganda; and posters were plastered around towns and cities. Franco, the committee maintained, “is a rebel. His troops are invaders. His ships are pirates... The war in Spain is an international war... We are not neutrals in this conflict. We have never been neutrals; we will never be neutrals; we cannot be neutrals.” The committee called for the immediate withdrawal of foreign troops in Spain and insisted that the legitimate government be allowed to purchase weapons.

In December 1937, Otto Katz organised another visit to Spain for Ellen, this time with Clement Attlee. In Madrid, they visited the frontline trenches under artillery fire and carried out an inspection of the British Battalion.

**S**tarvation threatened to undermine the Spanish government’s war efforts, so the main focus of Ellen’s work back in Britain was arranging humanitarian relief. She helped set up the Milk for Spain fund and persuaded the Co-operative Union to get involved. Customers at the 20,000 Co-operative shops were encouraged to buy a sixpenny token to help towards the purchase of cost-price condensed milk and milk powder to be sent to Spain. In Barcelona, for example, the fund served 33,000 glasses of milk and a biscuit to children each morning.

Ellen, however, was fully aware that the Spanish government needed more than milk and food to win. Everywhere she could, in the House of Commons, at conferences, public meetings,

**“Soon people were calling Ellen the ‘pocket Pasionaria’.”**

demonstrations and in newspaper articles, she spoke of the need for arms. Ellen and Eleanor Rathbone constantly asked questions in the House of Commons about the so-called non-intervention pact, the plight of refugees and the role of Germany and Italy in providing arms to the rebel forces.

If the Spanish government were given the freedom to buy airplanes, anti-aircraft guns, artillery and tanks, Ellen urged, Franco’s insurgents could not win. If fascism triumphed over democracy, she prophesied, it would mean the consequent destruction of Europe.

On 1 April 1939 Franco declared victory over the democratically elected government of Spain; a few weeks earlier Chamberlain had recognised Franco’s regime. The fight against fascism ended ignominiously: until September.

Paula Bartley is the author of “Ellen Wilkinson: From Red Suffragist to Government Minister” (London: Pluto Press, 2014). Her other books are “Votes for Women” (2007) and “Emmeline Pankhurst” (2002).

Andrew Ward



Owen Jones at the IBMT’s 2015 commemoration in London’s Jubilee Gardens and (right) Vivienne Beach, whose uncle Alfred Lichfield was mentioned by Owen in his speech, at the International Brigade memorial in the park.



## How an Owen Jones speech, an internet search and a little help from the IBMT solved an 86-year-old family mystery

By Jim Jump

**A** long-held family mystery has been solved thanks to the IBMT and the memorable speech made by political commentator and author Owen Jones at our commemoration on London’s South Bank in July last year.

Owen interspersed his eulogy to the International Brigades with randomly chosen names of some of those who had been killed in the war in Spain. And among them was “Alfred Lichfield of Gateshead, who died at Gandesa”.

Three months later a niece of Alfred “Alfie” Lichfield was, not for the first time, doing an internet search of his name, hoping once again to find out what happened to her father’s brother from Gateshead who had disappeared without trace 86 years ago.

This time Vivienne Beach was taken aback when a link appeared to her uncle’s name. He was mentioned in the speech given by Owen Jones, which had been reproduced in full in the *IBMT Newsletter* and on the IBMT website.

The mystery was solved: Alfred Lichfield had died in the Spanish Civil War.

“We grew up with the story that Alfie was sent to buy some groceries in 1929 by his elder sister,” Vivienne explains. “Alfie was never heard of again, and then the family moved to Essex.” They had no idea that Alfie had subsequently gone to Spain to join the International Brigades.

Vivienne contacted the IBMT and we were able to give her a few more details: Alfie had joined the British Battalion in November 1937. He was in the Young Communist League, worked as a ship’s steward and was a member of the National Union of Seamen. He was killed in

action on 26 July 1938 in the Battle of the Ebro.

Vivienne’s delight with knowing the fate of her uncle is tinged with sadness, however. Her father died 10 years ago in ignorance of Alfred’s fate. “He never knew that his brother was a hero,” she says. “My dad would have been thrilled.”

In February this year Vivienne and sister Hilary travelled from Birmingham to visit the International Brigade archive at the Marx Memorial Library in London. There they were moved to tears when they saw Alfie’s name on the memorial plaque to the 90 dead of the British Battalion at the Ebro. Originally unveiled in 2005 in the Sierra de Pandols on the Ebro battlefield, the plaque was broken into three pieces in a neo-fascist act of vandalism – but will soon be going on display at the Marx Memorial Library.

A replacement plaque, including Alfred’s name, is in the Sierra de Pandols, close to where he died. Vivienne and Hilary plan to visit the memorial in Catalonia this autumn.

“We are so proud to see his name on a memorial and that he was honoured for his sacrifice,” says Vivienne.

Helping families find out more about relatives who went to Spain is one of the important roles of the IBMT. This time we were greatly assisted by Owen Jones – and the wonders of the internet.

As Vivienne says: “We have Owen Jones to thank for making that speech which we have all viewed on YouTube and find very emotional.”



“A Lichfield” listed on the plaque naming the British Battalion dead in the Sierra Pandols in Spain.



# Not an IBMT member? Join now and help keep alive the memory and spirit of the volunteers

Complete the form below and send subscriptions and any donations to:  
IBMT, 37a Clerkenwell Green, London EC1R 0DU

For a Direct Debit form or for any other membership or subscription queries  
tel: 029 2019 5412; email: memsec@international-brigades.org.uk

## Membership application form

Full name

Up to three additional names (for family membership)\*

Address

Postcode

Email\*\*

Telephone\*

Membership category and annual subscription rate (please tick as appropriate):

- Free – International Brigade veterans and partners and widow/ers
- £25 – Family (single household)
- £20 – Individual
- £12.50 – Unwaged
- Institutions – contact Membership Secretary (see above) for rates

Donation of £\_\_\_\_\_ enclosed\*

Signature

Date

\* Optional / If applicable

\*\* Members who provide an email address will receive our news service emails.

Make cheques payable to International Brigade Memorial Trust.

NB: Please note that different annual subscription rates apply to overseas (non-UK) members. These reflect the higher postage costs of mailing the IBMT Newsletter. They are:

- Family (single household): £30 / \$48 / €37
- Individual: £25 / \$40 / €30
- Unwaged: £17 / \$27 / €22

## Gift Aid declaration

Please complete if you are a UK taxpayer:

*I wish this and all subsequent payments to the International Brigade Memorial Trust to be treated as Gift Aid donations.*

Name

Signature

Date

*Keeping alive the memory and spirit of the men and women  
who volunteered to defend democracy and fight fascism in  
Spain from 1936 to 1939*

**International Brigade Memorial Trust**

[www.international-brigades.org.uk](http://www.international-brigades.org.uk)

Registered charity no. 1094928

## FEATURES

By Christopher Hall

Even after 80 years the role of the Independent Labour Party in the Spanish Civil War is a controversial topic. George Orwell's "Homage to Catalonia" is still the most famous and most read book about the war; equally, Ken Loach's "Land and Freedom" is its best known cinematic portrayal. Both works cover a very small and distinct part of the civil war – which virtually ignores the war as a whole and the role of the International Brigades.

The ILP, like the Communist Party, threw its energy and resources into fighting fascism in Spain, and the ILP and its members were involved in far more than the events depicted by Orwell and Loach.

In the 1930s the ILP was a revolutionary socialist party in sharp decline. It had left the Labour Party in 1932 in an argument over "standing orders" and had seen its membership fall from around 16,000 in 1932 to about 4,000 in 1936. Its four MPs, led by the charismatic James Maxton, gave the ILP a greater profile than its influence on the ground merited.

Like the Communist Party and left-wing members of the Labour Party and trade unions, the ILP was involved in the Hunger Marches and was also part of the resistance to Oswald Mosley's Blackshirts at Cable Street in 1936.

When the Spanish Civil War began in July 1936 the ILP belonged to an International known as the London Bureau, which consisted of small left-wing socialist and dissident communist parties. Her sister party in Spain was the POUM (Partido Obrero de Unificación Marxista), an anti-Stalinist communist party which supported the revolution that had broken out in Catalonia in response to the military uprising.

The ILP was involved in the Spanish Civil War in three main areas: humanitarian aid, military volunteers and political lobbying.

From the beginning of the war the ILP began to raise money to help her sister party in Spain. There was even a "self-denial" week in which individuals had to give up a luxury and the money saved was donated to aid Spain.

Funds were forwarded to John McNair, who had been sent to Barcelona to set up an ILP office and make contact with the POUM executive. McNair passed on the money to the POUM to buy medical supplies. Once over £1,000 had been raised the ILP bought a van, which was turned

***"ILP volunteers fought in a variety of military forces in Spain. These included the ILP's own unit, the 'ILP Contingent', militias, the Republican army and the International Brigades."***

# The ILP and Spain: minor role – but massive effort



ILP pamphlets and (right) volunteer Bob Edwards, a leading ILP activist.

into an ambulance, filled with medical supplies, driven to Spain along with two nurses and given to the POUM. One of the drivers, with First World War artillery experience, stayed behind to command a militia artillery unit.

In 1937 the ILP raised funds to fill a food-ship to help with feeding the people of Bilbao in the Basque Country. When the Spanish Republican government refused the offer, the money was used to send further medical supplies to Spain and to finance the care of Basque refugee children – 4,000 of whom had been evacuated to the UK. The ILP housed 40 of them at the The Grange in Street, Somerset. The house was supplied by the Quaker Clark family (as in Clarks Shoes).

In Newport ILP members worked closely with the local Communist Party. In Aberdeen the ILP and Communist Party also worked together, up until June 1937, when the POUM was declared an illegal political party in Spain and relations between the local members broke down.

ILP volunteers fought in a variety of military forces in Spain. These included the ILP's own unit, the "ILP Contingent", militias, the Republican army and the International Brigades.

In autumn 1936 Bob Edwards, a member of the ILP executive (National Administrative Council), won agreement to raise a military force to help the POUM. In all, around 25 men left the UK for Spain in January 1937 and were joined in Spain by more British volunteers, including Orwell, bringing its strength up to a high of around 40.

Military training was virtually non-existent and, after two weeks of mainly marching up and down, the volunteers were taken by bus to the front, where they received antiquated rifles and very limited ammunition.

They stayed there until late March 1937. The front was a quiet one and the ILP Contingent took

part in no major battles and only a single trench raid. As Orwell famously exclaimed: "...nothing happened, nothing ever happened. The English had got into the habit of saying that this wasn't war, it was a bloody pantomime."

In late March 1937 the ILP unit was on leave in Barcelona, where they met Walter Tapsell, Commissar of the British Battalion of the International Brigades, to discuss joining them. The "May Days" made this impossible: the POUM and the Anarchists of the CNT-FAI took up arms when government forces attempted to re-take buildings and services controlled by the revolutionaries. The ILP volunteers were involved in a passive way in the May Days, guarding POUM-held buildings. One ILPer took to his hotel room with a large quantity of beer, hoping to sit out the troubles, but was arrested.

After the May Days some volunteers went home, some joined other units and around half returned to the front with the ILP Contingent. In June 1937 the POUM was outlawed and most of the ILP volunteers returned home to avoid arrest. Several, though, joined other Republican units. The last ILP volunteer to leave Spain was Reg Hiddlestone in February 1939.

Like the British Battalion, the bulk of the ILP Contingent were party members; most were of working-class origin and active trade unionists. A few had had previous military experience either in peace-time or in the First World War. One man even deserted from the Tank Corps to join the ILP Contingent in Spain.

The vast majority of the volunteers were dedicated anti-fascists, with only a handful there purely to support the revolution. Two men even applied at the same time to join both the ILP Contingent and the International Brigades, but joined

the ILP unit because it replied to them first.

Two members of the ILP Contingent were killed in Spain. Bob Smillie died from untreated appendicitis in a Spanish prison, where neglect and incompetence seemed to be the cause of death rather than any deliberate action. Arthur Chambers was killed fighting in an anarchist unit in July 1937. In all 13 members of the ILP unit were wounded and two hospitalised.

At least 15 and possibly as many as 100-plus ILP members joined the International Brigades. Two leading Merthyr ILPers served in the British Battalion: Evan Peters and Lance Rogers, who joined the Communist Party while in Spain, but re-joined the ILP on returning home, after which he was a conscientious objector in the Second World War.

Three Merseyside ILPers fought in the International Brigades, with one, James Stewart, being killed at Jarama in February 1937. Swinton (in Salford) Branch ILP member Walter Sproston was killed at Calaceite in March 1938.

Up to June 1937 the ILP supported the POUM politically. ILP MP John McGovern visited Spain on a propaganda tour in the autumn of 1936. After the POUM was banned the ILP continued to support the Spanish Republic, but also attempted to get POUM prisoners released and were involved in three delegations to Spain in 1937-38.

In addition, David Murray, who was in Spain investigating the death of Bob Smillie for the ILP, helped Scottish International Brigaders who had been imprisoned for indiscipline and insubordination. He gave them clothes, food and cigarettes and passed messages to their relatives.

The role of the ILP in the Spanish Civil War was a very minor one and did little to affect the course of the war. In addition, its support for the POUM meant it was ostracised by other left-wing parties. But considering the size of the ILP and its very limited financial resources, party members put a tremendous effort and huge amounts of energy into fighting fascism and helping the POUM in Spain. Their contribution and sacrifice need to be remembered.

Christopher Hall is an IBMT Trustee and the author of "Not Just Orwell: The Independent Labour Party Volunteers and the Spanish Civil War" (Barcelona: Warren & Pell, 2009).

**EVENT IN SALFORD:** On Saturday 24 September (11.30am-2.30pm) there will be a re-dedication of the plaque to the ILP volunteers in the Working Class Movement Library in Salford. Several of the volunteers' family members are expected to be present, including George Orwell's son, Richard, and Quentin Kopp, the son of Orwell's commander in Spain. It is also hoped that a new sculpture of Bob Smillie, by Frank Casey, will be on display. The event is being supported by the Orwell Society and the modern ILP. All members of the IBMT are welcome. For more details of the event email Christopher Hall: [christoff\_hall@yahoo.com].

# Reluctantly finding a home in Britain: Spanish Republican refugees and exiles in the 1940s

**1**939 and 1940 were crucial years for us. The Spanish Civil War ended in April 1939 and the Second World War started in September. By early 1940, most of the nearly 4,000 *niños vascos* (Basque children) had been repatriated. The British government never wanted us and did its utmost to get rid of us. But some 470 of us remained in the UK to live through the duration of the war.

At the end of the civil war other exiles arrived. Some managed to come as diplomatic exiles because of their positions in the Spanish Republic's government. Others were brought out of the concentration camps on the beaches of southern France by Quakers such as Alec Wainman, who had to guarantee their keep because these exiles were not allowed to work. Others arrived via Gibraltar, joining those citizens evacuated to Britain. Some made their way here via the French Foreign Legion.

The British government did not want any of us. We were classified as "aliens" and we had to observe many restrictions. Life could be difficult. Some of these older exiles helped out in the *colonias* ("colonies" or residential homes) for Basque children and did excellent work among us.

There was little cohesion amongst these diverse *Republicanos* having to survive in a foreign country. The Basque refugees had the common unifying experience of having lived together in the *colonias* scattered throughout the UK. Those living in the Midlands tended to meet up at the home of Molly Garrett in Birmingham. They organised a football team. Those living in the London area started to publish a regular bulletin, *Amistad*, with contributions from around the UK. Much of the work was done at the offices of the Basque Children's Committee at 39 Victoria Street, London.

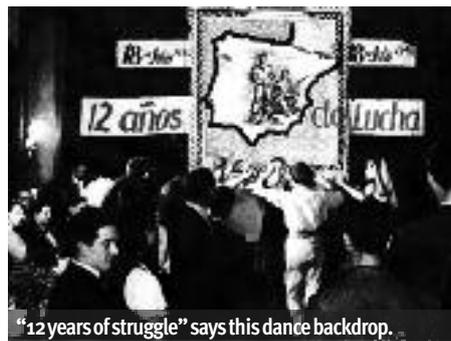
The *colonias* gradually closed till there was only The Culvers in Carshalton, which housed the younger children. Theatre director Pepe Estruch, who had been a friend of Federico García Lorca and was one of those taken out of the French concentration camps by Alec Wainman, ran the *colonia* and several other adults helped out. The Culvers became a meeting place not only for the Basque refugees but also for some of the older *Republicanos*. Fiestas were organised there and some cultural activities, such as a theatre group.

**D**r Juan Negrín, the Republican Prime Minister, who had sought exile in Paris, came to London when Nazi Germany invaded France. Other politicians, such as Álvarez del Vayo, the Foreign Minister, Pablo Azcárate, the Republican ambassador, sought

**HERMINIO MARTÍNEZ** was one the refugee children from the Basque Country who arrived in Southampton from Bilbao in May 1937 fleeing Franco's terror-bombing campaign in northern Spain. He made his home in Britain, but the first few years were far from easy, as he describes here.



Music lesson at The Culvers.



"12 years of struggle" says this dance backdrop.



The choir at El Hogar, with conductor Manolo Lazareno.



El Hogar was in 22 Inverness Terrace, Bayswater.

asylum in London. Negrín was very supportive of the Republican exiles. He would visit the children at The Culvers and Barnet *colonias* and helped with funding. He made sure there was money for the Juan Luis Vives scholarships that allowed many exiles and refugees to study.

In October 1941 Negrín took on the lease of a large house at 22 Inverness Terrace in Bayswater, west London, which became the "Hogar Español" (Spanish Home) or simply El Hogar.

El Hogar became a social, cultural and political centre for all the *Republicanos*. Other anti-fascists also met and socialised there. Jack Brent, the International Brigader, was often at the entrance giving out literature. Nan Green, another volunteer in Spain, was to be seen there with friends. The Brigaders also used the Hogar for some of their meetings.

Suddenly, all the pent-up energies of the diverse groups of *Republicanos* were released. *Amistad* now had a centre from which to operate. Dances were held at weekends. Gradually, many of the exiles and refugees tended to move to London. They now had a "home". Deep friendships and comradeship were forged.

**A**part from the socialising and political campaigning, there were some wonderful cultural activities. A mixed choir was formed under the direction of Manolo Lazareno, who had been a professional musicologist in Spain. It was wonderful to see such a diverse set of young exiles taking so well to this work. A theatre group was set up under the direction of Pepe Estruch and a folk-dancing group was run by several other individuals. Also, an excellent football team was established.

I have always likened the cultural activities at El Hogar to the work done in Spain with the *Misiones Culturales* (Cultural Missions) of the Spanish Republic – artistic exhibitions and performances that toured remote parts of Spain. For many of us who missed out on living our early life in Spain, it was a priceless opportunity to encounter the richness of Spanish culture.

Pepe Estruch directed the *grupo de teatro* at the Hogar. It tended to stage works by the clas-

sical dramatists of Spain's Golden Age: Calderón, Lope de Vega and Cervantes. But the group also produced works by modern dramatists such as Lorca. Not being an actor in any way, I was the prompter. We were fortunate enough to get to know Spanish theatre at its best. Pepe eventually returned to Madrid and transformed the moribund Spanish theatre scene. He was awarded the Premio Nacional (National Prize) in 1990 for his work.

The refugees and exiles came from all the corners of Spain. Hence, the performances of the folk-dancing group represented many of the regions. I loved especially the *Toledana* (from Toledo). I still have in my mind these beautiful dances and regional costumes.

As for the political activities at the Hogar, I am afraid that the same dissensions and divisions that had plagued the Spanish left during the short period of the Second Republic affected the politics of the Hogar. There was a dreadful lack of unity.

**A**t the end of the war in 1945 we were all expecting the Allies to end Europe's last remaining fascist dictatorship. At The Culvers we lit a great bonfire to celebrate the end of the war and our forthcoming return to Spain. It was not to be. The Cold War set in and the Americans wanted the bases that Franco was prepared to provide. Ernest Bevin, the British Foreign Minister, made welcoming overtures to Franco. The disillusionment was horrific. Some of the refugees found their families in France, Chile or Mexico and joined them.

The Hogar closed in 1947. Negrín and other politicians had gone to Mexico. Franco's fascist regime was well established. We maintained some of the activities started at the Hogar in

***“The Cold War set in and the Americans wanted the bases that Franco was prepared to provide. Ernest Bevin, the British Foreign Minister, made welcoming overtures to Franco. The disillusionment was horrific.”***

various places. Every Saturday evening there was a dance at the Fox School in Notting Hill. The folk-dancing and choir also continued, as did the theatre group, staging plays at the 20th Century Theatre in Notting Hill and other venues.

We always kept hope alive, but it would be many years before changes in Spain permitted us to return.

Herminio Martínez [herminio1930@yahoo.co.uk] is looking for copies of recordings made by the BBC of the choir at El Hogar, which, he says, appeared on two records. “It would be a pity to lose such wonderful work,” he says.

## Photo of Beckett and Caudwell



Neil Gore wants to identify the people pictured in this photo (above) along with Christopher Caudwell (right) and Clem Beckett (second from right). Neil is working on the script of the play “Dare Devil Rides to Jarama” about the fate of Beckett and Caudwell in Spain.

He writes: “The photo appeared on the front page of the 14 December 1936 edition of the *Daily Worker* under the heading ‘They drive the ambulances’. The caption mentions Clem Beckett, but no-one else. I’m quite sure that Beckett was already in Spain by this point, so it’s not clear when the photo was taken. Hopefully someone can shed some light on this, because it may mean that Beckett and Caudwell met before they were (re)united in Spain—especially as the photo looks like it was taken in a London street.”

Contact: [neil.gore@hotmail.co.uk].

## Who's the ‘British Girl Volunteer’?



John Kitchingman is trying to trace the identity of the young woman in this photo. It was taken in December 1936 in Barcelona. From her insignia she is likely to be a medic, John believes. The full photograph shows more of her

military uniform and a string-tied rolled blanket over her left shoulder.

John bought the original print in a bric-à-brac shop in Southport. The shopkeeper said it had come from a Liverpool newspaper. The print has a typed label on the reverse with a caption dated 9/10 December 1936 saying: “British Girl Volunteer Fights for Spain” and adding that she is “leaving Barcelona to join the loyalists ahead of General Franco’s rebel forces whose main assault against Madrid is expected within the next few hours”. There is also a copyright stamp of Planet News Ltd. John has contacted the successor to Planet News but they cannot locate the original photo.

Contact [John.Kitchingman@psg-law.co.uk].

## Seeking families of volunteers fallen in Spain

Olatz Gorrotxategi writes from Spain’s Basque Country to say that he is putting together a drama based on the movement for historical memory in Spain. His project has been selected as part of the programme for San Sebastián/

Donostia being declared Europe’s 2016 Capital of Culture. He is currently interviewing families in Spain who lost relatives in the Spanish Civil War, but also wants to talk to any family members of International Brigaders who were killed in the war.

Contact: [431344n@gmail.com].

## Who’s who in the Rosa Branson mural?

Judith Cravitz is trying to identify the people who appear (see images below) in Rosa Branson’s mural painting in tribute to the International Brigades. Judith is the daughter of International Brigader Frank Lesser and a tour guide at the Marx Memorial Library, where Branson’s painting—donated in 2011—is on display, along with original banners of the British Battalion.

She explains: “Rosa Branson [daughter of International Brigader Clive Branson] used press cuttings and photographs. All the people in the painting are real, and I would like to identify as many of them as possible to help me with the tour-guiding.”

Contact: [j\_cravitz@hotmail.com]. For tours of the Marx Memorial Library (on Tuesdays and Thursdays), contact [info@marx-memorial-library.org].



Sections of the Rosa Branson mural painting which hangs in the Marx Memorial Library in London.

## Delmer Berg



By Robert Coale

Delmer Berg, who died on 28 February 2016 at the age of 100, was the last known surviving veteran of the Abraham Lincoln Brigade [the collective name given to the volunteers from the US].

Del was born on 20 December 1915 in southern California to a family of poor farm workers. Seeking better economic opportunities, the Bergs moved to Oregon. But, as the country foundered in the Great Depression, teenage Del dropped out of high school to assist his father. Del's political consciousness was forged in these early years.

Del saw the threat of the rise of fascism in Europe and wanted to travel to Spain. A billboard advertising the "Friends of the Abraham Lincoln Brigade" brought Del into the fold. After "licking 10,000 stamps" in the winter

of 1937/8, Del was on a ship to France and would make the trek across the Pyrenees, following in the footsteps of so many volunteers before him.

While in Spain, he served in a field artillery and anti-aircraft artillery battery, ultimately laying communication lines from the Republican headquarters to the front during the momentous Battle of the Ebro. His next and final post in the city of Valencia was quiet until his unit's lodgings in a monastery were bombed by a fascist airplane aiming for a railway station.

Despite the shrapnel in his liver, Del's life after Spain was an active one. He was drafted into the army. He feared discrimination because of his political affiliations but instead was surprisingly given his choice of outfit by his recruiter. He was called to appear before the House Un-American Activities Committee during the postwar era but "they could never find me to serve a summons," he gleefully recounted in 2012.

Del's political commitments were various: the Young Communist League, United Farm Workers, the anti-Vietnam War movement and peace and justice committees. In his final years, Del lived comfortably in his self-built home in the Sierra Nevada foothills in

California. He revealed his secret to longevity in 2014: "I think staying politically active keeps me alive... It fills my life. I never slowed down – I'm right in the middle of things yet."

This is an edited version of an article that first appeared on the ALBA blog. See [www.alba-valb.org](http://www.alba-valb.org).



## Luis Quesada

Luis Alberto Quesada, the last of the 900 Argentinean volunteers who fought for the Spanish Republic, died on 12 December 2015, aged 96. He was born in Buenos Aires on 22 August 1919

into an immigrant Andalusian family that returned to Spain while he was still a child.

In the Republican army he fought at the Ebro in 1938 and in the retreat through Catalonia early in 1939. During the Second World War he fought in the French Resistance and later crossed into Spain as a guerrilla. He was soon captured and spent the next 13 years in prison before being expelled from Spain and returning to Argentina.

## LETTERS

### I've written to the PM about Capt Dickson

The *Daily Telegraph* "ex-pats" edition has reported the presentation of a plaque at the Mansion House, Cardiff, organised by the IBMT, to the memory of Capt Archibald Dickson (see also *IBMT Newsletter* 2-2015).

My husband and I have been campaigning over the past two years for the British government to recognise and posthumously award Capt Dickson for his heroic act of saving 2,638 Spanish refugees during the Spanish Civil War, and also for the fact that his ship was torpedoed several months later at the commencement of the Second World War with the loss of all lives.

Capt Dickson came to our notice after a two-page article in *El País* was written on the 75th anniversary of this selfless act. The report lauded him and a few of the original survivors attended an emotional ceremony of remembrance in Alicante, alongside many thousands of family descendents who would clearly not be here today but for his fortitude and resolve.

It was the first time that either my husband or I had heard of this supreme act of defiance and bravery, and to date we have written six letters to the Prime Minister's office requesting that the deed be recognised. The last communication informed us that the matter was "out of time" for an award to be considered. Our reply pointed out

that last year the French government awarded the Légion d'Honneur to a British sergeant for his bravery at Arnheim, 71 years after the event!

We hope the IBMT can add its considerable influence to this campaign. Why not a George Cross?

*Christina Elliott*  
Zuheros, Córdoba

### Correct to back Soviet anti-fascism

Richard Baxell's valuable review of "Radiant Illusion?" (*IBMT Newsletter* 1-2016) draws out many of the positive aspects of 1930s communism. In this period the Communist Party of Great Britain was involved in every progressive struggle and social movement, while some of its members made major contributions to the artistic and cultural life of Britain.

Spain was a high point. Without the CPGB there would have been no Aid to Spain movement and no effective organisation of volunteers to join the International Brigades, which were initiated by the international communist movement.

Some on the left outside of the Communist Party, including highly respected academics and lawyers, also gave wholehearted support to many aspects of Soviet policies in the 1930s. They refused to accept what they saw as the lies of the *Daily Mail* and right-wing politicians, while they applauded the anti-fascist role played by the world's first socialist state.

The supporters of the Soviet Union saw "philo-

sophical about turns" as realistic responses to changes in the balance of political and class forces. Most were totally unaware of the horrendous crimes committed against human rights, socialist and democratic values. They were aware that fascism was on the march, threatening the very existence of the Soviet Union as well as human rights throughout the world.

The Cambridge spies were not CP members and had no contact with the Communist Party. Dave Springhall, who served in Spain, was expelled in 1943 from the party after being found guilty in a secret court of providing information to Britain's war-time ally, the Soviet Union.

*Tom Sibley*  
By email

### More about Josep Trueta

The reference to orthopaedic surgeon Josep Trueta (1897-1977) in your book reviews ("Pioneers of blood transfusion techniques", *IBMT Newsletter* 1-2016) reminded me of a book we published five years ago. I don't think we sent it to the IBMT at the time.

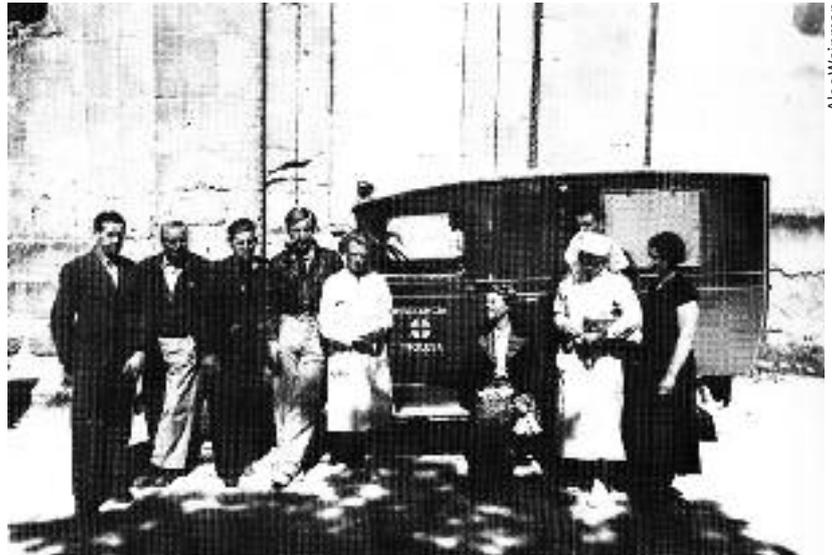
A very late mention would be appreciated! "Trueta" by Àngels Aymar is the playscript of a drama depicting Josep Trueta's personal, professional and political dilemmas faced during and after the Spanish Civil War and in London and Oxford during the Second World War.

*Ross Bradshaw*  
Five Leaves Publishing  
[www.fiveleaves.co.uk](http://www.fiveleaves.co.uk)

Alec Wainman



Two photos taken by Alec Wainman at International Brigade hospitals in 1937: Convalescent volunteers and local children (left) at Benicàssim on 18 May and British medics (right) at the hospital in Huete on 23 May with an ambulance newly arrived from Britain.



Alec Wainman

# An ‘English Suitcase’ of photographic gems

**SONIA BOUÉ** reviews a book presenting 210 photos from the Spanish Civil War, many of them previously unpublished, that were taken by Alec Wainman (1913-1989). Born in north Yorkshire and raised in Canada and Oxford, Wainman was a Quaker and joined British medical volunteers who travelled to Spain in August 1936. His involvement in the anti-Francoist cause continued until the end of the war, in which, as this unique collection of images documents, he served in many different capacities throughout Republican Spain.

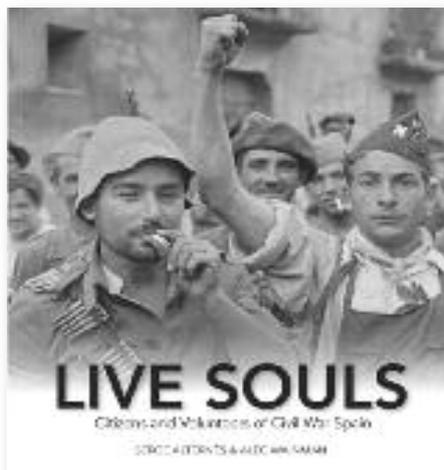
Wainman planned in 1975 to publish a selection of his photos along with a memoir of the war in Spain. A few of his pictures appeared individually in books – but Alec was rarely if ever properly credited and the more ambitious project came to nothing. The photos were eventually deemed lost, until the complete cache of negatives taken on his Leitz Leica camera was discovered in 2013 in the possession of a publisher with whom Alec had corresponded.

“**L**ive Souls”\* is a book of previously lost photographic reportage taken during the Spanish Civil War. It also contains an unfinished memoir and an inventory of official documents from the period. It has a great deal of interest to offer both for the committed reader and those new to the subject.

Importantly it is also a son’s tribute to an extraordinary father, Alec Wainman, whose singular contribution to the Spanish conflict has hitherto remained untreated and untouched, but for my own film collaboration of 2014, called “Without You I Would Not Exist”.

Homage, in my view, is this book’s true function and is therefore best read as such; especially with regard to the brief chapter of concluding historical summary. We lack, for example, balance in the glancing account of the French response to the question of the Spanish exiles, which included complicity in the dispatch of Republicans to the Nazi camps (including Mauthausen) and official indifference to the cruel conditions in the camps.

Serge Alternès (who is Wainman’s son) was faced with a difficult task on finally locating his very own English Suitcase (as in the case of Robert Capa’s Mexican equivalent) more than 70 years after the event. The 57 rolls of film to emerge were dated, with location and a brief description also given on each box, but the 1,650 individual photo-



graphic negatives were naturally not captioned, leading to some errors in the current edition.

Alec Wainman’s role in Spain is a fascinating case. He was an extremely gifted young man, whose talents appear to have been swiftly utilised in multiple capacities: volunteer ambulance driver, translator, escort (for the newly recruited nurses), press photographer and “mechanic”. The collection of 18 preserved identification and security passes towards the end of this book provides an insight into the trust with which Alec was held and his range of movements during this

period. We also see the extent of his almost instant flexibility of role, obtaining a pass for entry to the Hispano-Suiza Fábrica de Automóviles car factory as an interpreter as early as November 1936.

In addition to the ambulance work at the outset of war in 1936, at its close Alec saved several Spanish Republican exiles from the French internment camps in 1939, and the book deals briefly with this episode in Serge’s words. Tragically, Alec developed Alzheimer’s disease in 1981, but we are treated to his impressions (looking back in 1975) as a volunteer ambulance driver with the Spanish Medical Aid Committee in Spain and as an eyewitness to key events such as the siege of Madrid, the Barcelona uprising and air raids in Valencia.

## Stigma

It has been interesting to read about the stigma Alec’s volunteerism and adherence to the Republican cause seemed to evoke on his return to England. This added a new dimension to my understanding of the British context. Yet later Alec was able to utilise well his notable “...discretion and ability to blend in and pass between the lines”.

It has also emerged that Alec became a Special Operations Executive agent for the British government during the Second World War in 1943. This most particular profile and skill set, honed perhaps in Spain, now appear to make sense of this later development.

An exemplary force in the fight against fascism, and a wonderful photographer, this fascinating tribute to Alec Wainman is highly recommended.

\*“Live Souls: Citizens and Volunteers of Civil War Spain” by Serge Alternès and Alec Wainman (Vancouver: Ronsdale Press, 2015) £20.99.

For more about Alec Wainman see also “No Other Way: Oxfordshire and the Spanish Civil War 1936-39” by Chris Farman, Valery Rose and Liz Woolley (ordering details on page 6).

Sonia Boué is an Oxford-based artist and IBMT member.

**John Cornford's writings**



The collected writings of John Cornford, "Understand the Weapon, Understand the Wound", have been published by Carcanet Press ([www.carcanet.co.uk](http://www.carcanet.co.uk)). Cornford was killed while fighting with the International Brigades at Lopera, near Córdoba, in December 1936. Aged 21, his poems, prose and political essays had already revealed great literary and intellectual gifts. Edited by poet Jonathan Gelassi, the new edition features an afterword by historian and IBMT Chair Richard Baxell. It is on sale as a paperback for £9.99 or in eBook or Kindle formats.

**BBC urged to release song documentary**

Folksinger and Spanish Civil War song enthusiast Geoff Lawes is pressing the BBC to make available for sale the celebrated Roy Palmer Radio 4 programme "Songs of Hope". The 1988 documentary about songs sung by the British and Irish volunteers in Spain features several Brigaders talking and singing, including Bob Doyle and Jimmy Jump.

Geoff has posted a message on the Mudcat Folk Discussion Forum suggesting that people should let the BBC know that they are interested in buying a recording of the programme.

Go to [<http://mudcat.org>] and search "Songs in English about the Spanish Civil War".

**Jackson novel published by Kindle**



Angela Jackson's Spanish Civil War novel "Warm Earth" about three women in the Spanish Civil War is now available on Kindle. The 2007 paperback edition has been out of print for several years but the novel can now be downloaded from Amazon for £2.10. The plot centres on three very different women who go to Spain to help the Republic. Praising Jackson's novel, fellow historian Paul Preston said on its publication that "its prose and emotional understanding breathe life into her unputdownable story of the sacrifices made and the dangers undergone by the remarkable women who went to Spain as volunteers".

**Two women photographers**

Works by two women photographers, both of whom were communists in the 1930s and whose output included images connected to the Spanish Civil War, are currently on show.

An exhibition of photos taken by Helen Muspratt is at the Pallant House Gallery, Chichester (until 8 May) and pictures taken by Edith Tudor-Hart form part of "Strange and Familiar: Britain as Revealed by International Photographers" at the Barbican Art Gallery, London (until 19 June).

Coinciding with the Pallant House Gallery exhibition, a biography of Helen Muspratt by daughter Jessica Sutcliffe and collection of her

photos, "Face: Shape and Angle" has been published by Manchester University Press. Both Muspratt and Tudor-Hart (who was married to International Brigade doctor Alex Tudor-Hart) documented the reception of the nearly 4,000 refugee children from the Basque Country who arrived in Southampton in May 1937.

**Study of International Brigade prison**



A new study of the International Brigade prison at Castelldefels estimates that between 250-300 volunteers were held there for various offences and that about 14 of them were summarily executed or died through mistreatment or in suspicious circumstances.

The figures appear in the first of a two-volume, online study of the prison by local historian Alfonso López Borgoñoz.

The castle at Castelldefels, located to the south of Barcelona, served as a prison run by the International Brigade high command between March 1938 and January 1939. Inmates included deserters, suspected spies and individuals accused of serious disciplinary breaches.

In Spanish only, the book can be downloaded free from: [<http://brigadasinternacionalescastelldefels.blogspot.com.es/2015/12/las-brigadas-internacionales-en.html>].

**'Fact versus Fiction' podcast**

A podcast is now available of the 24 February session of the 2016 London School of Economics Literary Festival dealing with "Fact versus Fiction? The Spanish Civil War in the Literary Imagination". The speakers were historians Helen Graham and Paul Preston and novelist Eduardo Mendoza.

See: [[www.lse.ac.uk/newsAndMedia/videoAndAudio/channels/publicLecturesAndEvents/player.aspx?id=3396](http://www.lse.ac.uk/newsAndMedia/videoAndAudio/channels/publicLecturesAndEvents/player.aspx?id=3396)].

**Germans for the Spanish Republic**



The first volume of a "biographical lexicon" of some 4,000 Germans who fought on the Republican side in the Spanish Civil War has been published.

Co-compiler Werner Abel says the aim is to make sure these volunteers – most of whom were in the Thälmann Battalion of the International Brigades – are "rescued from oblivion and receive deserved remembrance". He adds: "The lexicon has not restricted itself to the period in which those listed spent in Spain but, whenever possible, has tried to include a broader biographical sketch of their political activities and their occupations before and after the war in Spain."

"'Sie werden nicht durchkommen': Deutsche an der Seite der Spanischen Republik und der sozialen Revolution, Band 1" by Werner Abel and Enrico Hibert (Frankfurt: Verlag Edition AV, 2015) 45 euros (paperback).

# Passion and persecution



**"International Communism and the Spanish Civil War: Solidarity and Suspicion"** by Lisa A Kirschenbaum (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015) £64.99 (hardback)

Reviewed by Richard Baxell

Since the end of the Cold War and the consequent opening up of the Moscow archives, fresh light has been shone on the relationship between the Soviet Union, the Communist Party and Spain during the country's civil war.

Increasingly, this has allowed a rather more nuanced, "warts and all" analysis. Nicholas Deakin's "Radiant Illusion?" (reviewed in the last *IBMT Newsletter*) is a good example of this rather more thoughtful, balanced approach; so too is this latest study by Lisa Kirschenbaum.

Though the book's title refers to international communism, it focuses mainly on party members in the Soviet Union, Spain and the US. This may limit its appeal to a British audience, which would be a shame, because many of the issues the book discusses transcend nationality such as, for example, the accounts of communists "who reported, then and later, that in Spain they lived their ideals more intensely, passionately, and fully than they had anywhere else".

Likewise, discussions of the now well-known problems the International Brigade command faced – leave and repatriation, distrust of other nationalities, resentment of Spanish officers, lack of effective communications – could relate to any of the national units.

While the author does touch upon some of the more over-arching themes of the role of the Communist Party in Spain – including a refreshing scepticism towards the old trope that the Spanish Republic was controlled by Stalin – it is the individual lives of communists which are of main concern here.

Kirschenbaum's detailed discussion of notions of "communist identity" examines volunteers' attitudes towards a wide range of issues: the impact on families back home; bravery and cowardice in battle; drinking; sex

***"... in Spain they lived their ideals more intensely, passionately, and fully than they had anywhere else."***

# Finding true love amid cruelty, deception and political betrayal

**“Love and its Enemies” by Brian Murphy (Kindle Edition, 2015) is published in two volumes (“Roads to Brunete” and “Crossing Frontiers”) and can be downloaded from Amazon (£2.94 per volume)**

Reviewed by Marlene Sidaway

The two parts of “Love and its Enemies” provide a more realistic view of a medical unit during the Spanish Civil War than the title might suggest.

The heroine, Kate, initially volunteers in order to find her sweetheart, Joey, and persuade him to return to Ireland with her. When she finally manages to

track him down, he is adamant that his decision to join the International Brigades was necessary and right.

Kate returns to her work as a nurse and, although her unit is initially far from the front line and their main fight is against boredom and frustration, as the fighting gets nearer they are overwhelmed by the terrible injuries and deaths they must deal with.

The camaraderie, friendship and admiration she feels for the work of her colleagues convince her that her nursing skills too are much needed in this very uneven conflict. She is also struck by the

bravery and conviction of most of the patients, but there are those who voice their dissent and frustration about how the Republican fight is being managed.

At the same time Joey’s letters are beginning to reflect the same opinions. It is clear that amidst the rumours, misinformation and chaos of the war, coupled with all the propaganda broadcast by both sides, the conflict gives credence to the adage: “The first casualty of war is truth.”

Inevitably, Kate’s life is changed completely as she herself experiences cruelty, deception

and political betrayal but, even more importantly, she also finds true love and happiness.

However, as the defeat of the Republic brings even more misery and despair to the Spanish people, she too faces an uncertain future as she joins the thousands of refugees trying to reach the slim promise of safety in France.

This is a good read, a page-turning human story, during which we learn a great deal about the anti-fascist conflict and the vain struggle to establish a just society in Spain and the rest of the world.

Marlene Sidaway is the President of the IBMT.

and notions of masculinity, femininity and sexuality. The author is not afraid to tackle controversial issues, arguing that “despite the fact that gay men served in the International Brigades, homosexuality remained for many communists presumptively fascist”.

The final section of the book turns to the period after the war in Spain, recounting the persecution of Communist Party members in both the US and the USSR. It is a deeply dispiriting story and many readers will be shocked and appalled by the

**“...readers will be shocked and appalled by the levels of paranoia, distrust and persecution directed towards Spanish Civil War veterans...”**

levels of paranoia, distrust and persecution directed towards Spanish Civil War veterans on both sides of the Iron Curtain: “Labelled subversives and spies by authorities on both sides, they were harassed, tried, convicted and, in the Soviet bloc, tortured and sometimes executed.”

Yet, while Stalin’s brutal and murderous regime caused many party members and civil war veterans around the world to reject Soviet communism, the author argues that very few of them came to abandon the cause of Spanish democracy, or anti-fascism.

This is, I think, an important point to make. After all, just because the description of Republican Spain’s struggle as “the cause of all advanced and progressive humanity” originated with Joseph Stalin, it does not make it any less true.

Richard Baxell is the Chair of the IBMT and the author of “Unlikely Warriors: The Extraordinary Story Of The Britons Who Fought In The Spanish Civil War” (2014).

## Why and how did Mexico help?



**“Mexico and the Spanish Civil War: Political Repercussions for the Republican Cause” by Mario Ojeda Revah (Eastbourne: Sussex Academic Press, 2015) £25**

Reviewed by Wouter van Dijk

As one of the two main countries that lent support to the Spanish Republic during the Spanish Civil War, Mexico has received surprisingly little attention in the historiography of that war up to now. Although two earlier attempts have been undertaken to shed light on the topic, the author dismisses both as outdated.

Despite the difficult relationship between Mexico and Spain in the first decades of the 20th century, when the Republic was declared in Spain in 1931 relations improved considerably.

Both governments now saw the similarity of the problems confronting them, including rising conservative discontent, with many people on the right not unsympathetic towards Nazi Germany and Fascist Italy, a history of authoritarian regimes, and the need for land reform and the modernisation of the state and judicial apparatus.

Heading a left-wing government with a revolutionary background, Mexico’s President Lázaro Cárdenas didn’t have many friends among foreign governments in the 1930s. Republican Spain was an exception.

Cárdenas responded swiftly to the Spanish government’s call for help once the military rebellion broke out. Immediately the reserves of Mexico’s arms industry were shipped to Spain: the famous 20,000 rifles and 20 million rounds of ammunition. The help did not stop

there, although less is remembered about this nowadays.

Mexicans played a very active role in trying to set up arms deals on behalf of the Republic. Exploring these often shadowy diplomatic transactions required rigorous research in archives and the personal papers of the individuals involved.

There were also shipments of food, clothes and medicine from Mexico that were sent to Spain, all against payment with an exchange rate favourable to the Republic and paid for in Republican pesetas instead of the gold the Soviet Union was eager to lay its hands on.

On the diplomatic front, Mexico gave unconditional and unwavering support to the Republic in the League of Nations and internationally in general. It all proved to be in vain. Mexico and the Spanish Republic were both seen by many countries as “red” pariahs on a par with the communist Soviet Union.

The book ends with the immediate aftermath of the civil war, when Cárdenas allowed thousands of Republican refugees to emigrate to Mexico. This led to protests in his own country by the pro-Francoist lobby. In the end, even Cárdenas’s party felt obliged to appoint a more moderate politician as his successor in order to prevent civil strife in Mexico and to protect its revolutionary gains.

Ironically, the fear that made Cárdenas intervene in the Spanish conflict at its outset, namely that such an uprising could also happen in Mexico, eventually led him at the end of the war towards political moderation in response to rising tensions at home.

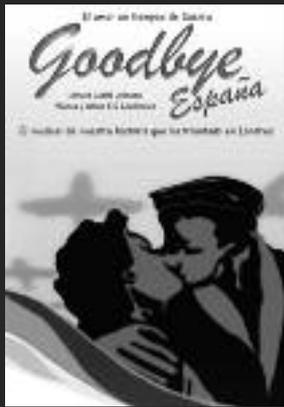
Mario Ojeda Revah has provided us with a very worthwhile study of the little known role of Mexico in the Spanish Civil War.

Wouter van Dijk is the co-founder and editor of the Hereditas Nexus history website ([www.hereditasnexus.com](http://www.hereditasnexus.com)).

**NOW IN MADRID:** A Spanish-language version of the acclaimed International Brigades musical “Goodbye Barcelona” has opened for a season at the Teatro Infanta Isabel in the heart of Madrid.

Written by Judith Johnson and Karl Lewkowicz, the IBMT-sponsored musical was enthusiastically received by audiences at the Arcola Theatre in London in 2011.

It has since then had an award-winning run in Catalan at the Teatre del Raval in Barcelona.



Under the new title “Goodbye España”, it opened on 26 April in the Spanish capital.

In 2014 the Catalan-language version was judged Best Musical in the annual Spanish Musical Theatre Awards.

The storyline centres on the fate of Sam, an 18-year-old from London’s East End, and a group of other International Brigade volunteers from Britain who travel to Spain to fight fascism.

See listing for 3 May.

**MADRID 3 May (and weekly thereafter):**

“Goodbye España”, Spanish-language version of the musical “Goodbye Barcelona” by Judith Johnson and Karl Lewkowicz, opens at the Teatro Infanta Isabel, 24 calle Barquillo, 28004; performances each Tuesday through the summer; see [www.gruposmedia.com/teatros/teatro-infanta-isabel].

**LONDON 12 May:** Public seminar “No Clouds across the Holiday Sun? The Politics of Tourism between Western Europe and the Franco Dictatorship, 1945–1975”; speaker: Patricia Hertel (University of Basel); chair: Prof Paul Preston; 6pm at Cañada Blanch Centre, Cowdray House, LSE, Portugal St, WC2A 2AE [www.lse.ac.uk/europeaninstitute/research/canadaBlanch/events.aspx].

**SALFORD 13 May:** Launch of Brigadista ale (see advert on page 5) at the Kings Head, Bloom St, M3 6AN from 7pm-12am; music from Joe Solo; tickets £5 from [http://kingsarmssalford.com] includes paella and raffle.



**LONDON 20 May:** London launch of Brigadista ale (see advert on page 5) at Ye Olde Rose & Crown, 55 Hoe St, E17 4SA from 7pm-12am; [www.yeolderoseandcrowntheatrepub.co.uk].

**HAMBURG 27-29 May:** 6th Anti-Fascist Harbour Event organised by KFSR International Brigade group; contact Reinhardt Silbermann for more information: [brigadistas36@gmx.de].

**ABERDEEN 28 May-10 September:** Exhibition marking 80th anniversary of a three-month strike by Spanish crew of the *Eolo* at start of Spanish Civil War; at Maritime Museum, Shiprow, AB11 5BY; admission free [www.aagm.co.uk/Visit/AberdeenMaritimeMuseum].

**LONDON 2 July:** Annual commemoration from 1pm-2pm at the International Brigade memorial, Jubilee Gardens, South Bank, SE1; wreath-laying, music and spoken word; plus informal social in Camel & Artichoke, 121 Lower Marsh St, SE1 7AE; [www.international-brigades.org.uk/events].

**MADRID 2 July:** Annual Battle of Brunete commemoration organised by Spanish AABI International Brigades friendship group and Brunete en la Memoria; [www.brigadasinternacionales.org]

and [http://bruneteenlamemoria.blogspot.co.uk].

**AMSTERDAM 6 July:** Commemoration of the Dutch volunteers who went to Spain to defend the Republic; from 11am-1pm at the International Brigade monument, Hagedoornplein, Amsterdam; [www.spanje3639.org].

**BELFAST 5 August:** Talk by Nancy Wallach from the Abraham Lincoln Brigade Archives on Paul Robeson’s anti-fascism and support for the Spanish Republic; 12pm-2pm at Shankill Road Library, 298-300 Shankill Rd, BT13 2BN; part of annual Féile an Phobail/People’s Festival.

**NELSON 20 August:** Conference “Lancashire and the Spanish Civil War” organised by Lancashire Association of Trades Union Councils; 11am-4pm; ACE Centre, Cross St, BB9 7NH.

**BEDFORD 24 September:** Opening night of the autumn tour of the IBMT-commissioned play “Dare Devil Rides to Jarama”; The Place, Bradgate Rd, MK40 3DE (www.theplacedford.org.uk); see inside front cover for more dates and booking information.

**SEAMEN ON STRIKE:** Aberdeen Maritime Museum is hosting an exhibition about a three-month strike by Spanish seamen in Aberdeen in 1936 that helped raise local awareness about the civil war in Spain.

The 20-strong crew of the steamer *Eolo* stopped work soon after the ship arrived in Aberdeen at the end of May 1936. They were angry that pay increases and improved conditions brought in by the Spanish Republic’s Popular Front government had not been implemented by their captain.

Coordinated by the Aberdeen Trades Union Council, a support network was set up by local unions and collections were held for the striking seamen. Their plight was given added urgency when news arrived in mid July of the fascist-backed military uprising against the Republic.

Two local labour movement activists, Bob Cooney and John Londrigan, paid a leading role in supporting the crew – and both would later join the International Brigades.

A deal was eventually brokered with the ship’s owners by the Spanish government.

The exhibition has been co-compiled by Gemma Reid, who has written her undergraduate dissertation on Aberdeen and the Spanish Civil War.

See listing for 28 May.

**SALFORD 24 September:** Rededication of plaque to ILP members who fought in Spain; 11.30am-2.30pm at the Working Class Movement Library, 51 Crescent, M5 4WX; see page 15.

**LONDON 1 October:** Night of music, film and spoken word to mark 80th anniversaries of the formation of the International Brigades and the Battle of Cable Street in London’s East End, both in October 1936; with The Wakes, The Hurriers, Louise Distras, Potent Whisper, Mark Thomas, Larne, Will Kaufman and Richard Baxell; from 7pm at Rich Mix, 35-47 Bethnal Green Rd, E1 6LA; event organised by Philosophy Football (www.philosophy-football.com) in association with the IBMT and other groups; booking details to be announced.

**LONDON 9 October:** 80th anniversary of the Battle of Cable Street (on 4 October 1936); march, rally and commemorative activities in and around Cable Street in London’s East End; details to come.

**DUBLIN 15 October:** Annual General Meeting of the IBMT; part of a weekend of activities; details to be announced in our next issue.

**LONDON 17-30 October:** International Brigade 80th anniversary commemorative events at the Marx Memorial Library (MML); 37a Clerkenwell Green, EC1R 0DU (www.marxlibrary.org.uk); provisional programme includes academic symposium, agitprop theatre workshop, evening of poetry and film, display of International Brigade artefacts and IBMT’s “Antifascistas” exhibition, labour movement seminar, and special performance of “Dare Devil Rides to Jarama”; organised by MML in association with the IBMT, Unite and Townsend Productions.

**PARIS 22 October:** Unveiling by French ACER International Brigade remembrance group of memorial at the Gare d’Austerlitz, marking the 80th anniversary of the creation of the International Brigades; details to be announced.



# MERCHANDISE

New items for 2016

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



## 15th International Brigade t-shirt

In the autumn of 1937 each of the International Brigades was presented with a flag at the Calderón Theatre in Madrid in a ceremony to celebrate the first anniversary of the formation of the International Brigades. This is a depiction of the flag of the mainly English-speaking 15th International Brigade, which included British, Irish, American, Canadian and Commonwealth volunteers. Produced by Philosophy Football from ethically sourced black cotton for the IBMT. "International Brigade Memorial Trust" on sleeve. Available in:  
 S (36inch/90cms chest)  
 M (40inch/100cms)  
 L (44inch/110cms)  
 XL (48inch/120cms)  
 XXL (52inch/130cms)  
 Fitted women's (34-36inch/70-90cms).  
 £15 plus £4.99 p&p



## Brigadista ale t-shirt

Advertises the commemorative ale promoting the IBMT for the 80th anniversary of the formation of the International Brigades. Ethically sourced bottle green (pictured) or black cotton shirt produced by Hope Not Hate exclusively for the IBMT. "International Brigade Memorial Trust" and International Brigade logo on sleeve. Please state colour preference when ordering. Available in:  
 S (36inch/90cms chest)  
 M (40inch/100cms)  
 L (44inch/110cms)  
 XL (48inch/120cms)  
 XXL (52inch/130cms)  
 £15 plus £4.99 p&p



## Replica flag

Reproduction of the British Battalion No.1 Company flag named after Labour Party leader Clement Attlee. 150cms x 87cms red background with dark gold lettering. Ideal for carrying on marches or simply putting on the wall.  
 £10 plus £4 p&p



## Volunteers for Liberty plate

Highly decorative commemorative plate made by Heraldic Pottery in Staffordshire exclusively for the IBMT. Fine bone china, 10.5inch (265mm) diameter plate. Re-issue of the much-sought 50th anniversary plate produced by International Brigade veteran Lou Kenton. Includes mount for wall display.  
 £25 plus £6.99 p&p



## Clenched fist sculpture

Life-sized sculpture in specially treated concrete. Based on the clenched fist created by sculptor Betty Rae at the top of the pole for the original British Battalion banner. 23cms high. The clenched fist was the iconic salute of the Popular Front and is still used by anti-fascists around the world.  
 £29.99 plus £7.99 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, 37a Clerkenwell Green, London EC1R 0DU.

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 (UK only).

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

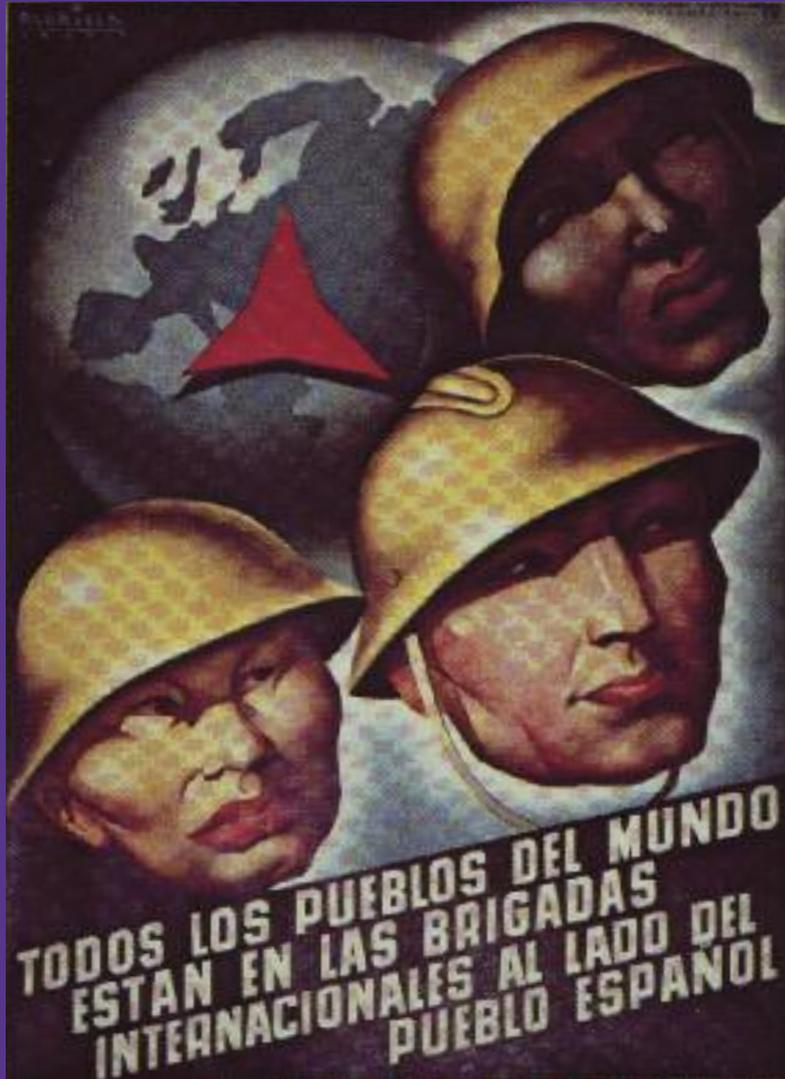


## ¡No Pasarán! bag

Ethically sourced jute bag (30cms square, 18cms across). One side printed, other blank. Robust bag, useful for any shopping trip and a great way to show support for anti-fascism and the IBMT.  
 £4.99 plus £2.99 p&p

COMMEMORATION

# INTERNATIONAL BRIGADES



*'All the peoples of the world are in the International Brigades on the side of the Spanish people'*



Celebrate  
their legacy  
in music and  
spoken word

**Saturday  
2 July**

**1pm-2pm**

International  
Brigade  
memorial  
Jubilee  
Gardens  
South Bank  
London



International Brigade Memorial Trust  
[www.international-brigades.org.uk](http://www.international-brigades.org.uk)