



IBMT Newsletter

www.international-brigades.org.uk

Issue 43 / 3-2016

INTERNATIONAL BRIGADE MEMORIAL TRUST



1936-2016

80 years
since the
formation of
the International Brigades



Photos by Andrew Wiard of our annual commemoration on London's South Bank on 2 July
Report and more photos on pages 8-9



Above: Paul Preston; below: Rodney Bickerstaffe and Maxine Peake.



IBMT NewsletterIssue no.43
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The illustration is by Raúl Fernández Calleja, known professionally as Raúl, and is titled "Homenaje a las Brigadas Internacionales" ("Homage to the International Brigades"). Originally drawn for the 60th anniversary commemoration of the International Brigades in 1996, it has been touring Spain this year in a major retrospective of Raúl's work.

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Including the launch of *Brigadista Ale* and a report of our London South Bank commemoration

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The Observer fails to notice the International Brigades

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- *Scottish writers and Spain*
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International Brigade Memorial Trust

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Vie Nouvelle



SCULPTURE: A new memorial to the International Brigades will be unveiled at the Gare d'Austerlitz railway station in Paris on 22 October.

It will take the form of a sculpture by Denis Monfleur (pictured) and is being supported by ACER (the IBMT's sister organisation in France), SNCF French railways and the CGT-Cheminots French rail workers' union.

The Gare d'Austerlitz was the main point of departure for the volunteers from around the world who travelled south through France by train before crossing the Pyrenees – for the most part clandestinely and on foot – to join the International Brigades.

The inauguration of the memorial is timed to coincide with the 80th anniversary of the formation of the International Brigades in October 1936.

Events mark 80th anniversary of October 1936

Remembering the creation of the International Brigades

By Jim Jump

This autumn marks the 80th anniversary of the creation of the International Brigades in October 1936 – three months after the fascist-backed military revolt that sparked the Spanish Civil War.

The involvement and sacrifice of the Brigaders will be commemorated by the IBMT and other organisations in a series of events in Britain, France, Spain and elsewhere.

Specially commissioned by the IBMT for the anniversary, the play "Dare Devil Rides to Jarama" will be premiered on 24 September and will tour the UK until 3 December.

A second leg of the tour of the play, written by Neil Gore, will begin early in 2017.

Next year's tour dates span the 80th anniversary of the Battle of Jarama. This was when the newly formed British Battalion went into action for the first time. A heavy price was paid in terms of lives lost, though the battalion's action helped prevent a fascist offensive from surrounding Madrid.

An IBMT-sponsored gala night of music and

spoken word linking the 80th anniversaries of the International Brigades and the Battle of Cable Street in London's East End will be hosted by Philosophy Football at Rich Mix, Shoreditch, on 1 October.

The Battle of Cable Street on 4 October 1936 saw anti-fascist protesters – including many who afterwards went to Spain – prevent the police from clearing a way for the fascist Blackshirts to march through the heart of the area's Jewish neighbourhood.

Meanwhile, at the People's History Museum in Manchester there will be a public symposium on Saturday 8 October in which several experts on Britain's response to the Spanish Civil War will take part.

And in London the Marx Memorial Library is organising a fortnight of activities from 17-30 October. These will coincide with six performance of "Dare Devil Rides to Jarama" at the Bussey Building theatre in Peckham.

The programme at Marx House will include a panel discussion by leading historians, including Paul Preston and Richard Baxell, on

Continued overleaf

Creation of the Brigades

From previous page

Tuesday 18 October and an evening of music and poetry on Thursday 20 October.

On Saturday 22 October International Brigade memorial groups from around the world are being invited to the inauguration of a major new memorial at the Gare d'Austerlitz dedicated to the International Brigaders who travelled to the Spanish frontier via the railway station in Paris.

The vast majority of the volunteers arrived in Spain after passing through the International Brigade recruitment office in the French capital. There they were screened and given medical examinations.

The memorial statue at the Gare d'Austerlitz is being erected by the French International Brigade association ACER.

In the week following the Paris unveiling there will also be a series of commemorative events in Benicásim, Albacete and Madrid supported by the Spanish AABI Friends of the International Brigades.

Decree

By the time the International Brigades were formally established by a decree of the Spanish Republic on 18 October 1936, many hundreds of international volunteers had already arrived in Spain to join militia units fighting the rebellion.

In total around 40,000 international volunteers from more than 50 countries joined the International Brigades. Of these, some 2,500 were from Britain and Ireland – and 526 of them died in Spain.

Only one British veteran survives: Stan Hilton, aged 98, a former merchant seaman from Newhaven, Sussex, who lives in a nursing home near Melbourne, Australia.

Check the Events page on the IBMT website (www.international-brigades.org.uk) for more information about 80th anniversary activities. See also notices on page 13 of this *IBMT Newsletter* and on the back cover and inside back cover.



The crew of the *Eolo* (right) and the front page of the *Daily Worker* on 26 May 1936.



Spanish crews took strike action in British ports during the run-up to war in Spain

Eighty years ago a wave of strikes hit Spanish ships in British ports as crews demanded pay increases that the new government of the Spanish Republic had decreed.

The lead story in the *Daily Worker* of 26 May 1936 was that the crews of six Spanish ships in Cumberland (now part of Cumbria) and Cardiff were engaged in a “dramatic strike struggle” to force shipowners to implement “the sweeping improvement in the conditions of the men which was made legally obligatory by the new Spanish government immediately following the victory of the People’s Front at the elections of 16 February”.

At Workington, men on four ships were in close touch with Maryport dockers and seafarers, according to the newspaper. A fifth ship had

been blockaded from the port and was held up off St Bees Head.

At Cardiff, 61 sailors, including the officers on the “4,000-ton steamer *Armouro* and the 6,000-ton *Conde di Abafol*”, were solidly on strike. They had all first learnt that they had the support of their comrades on ships at the Cumberland port through the *Daily Worker*.

The offending firm from Bilbao had another ship due in the port. Its crew were expected to join the strike, unless their demands were met.

The crew of the *Duero* had already set sail from Cardiff after they had secured the pay rises due to them.

Crew members working in engine rooms should have received a 53 per cent rise to 230 pesetas a month, sailors a rise of two-thirds and chief engineers 50 per cent.

As one peseta was worth seven British shillings, this would put Spanish seafarers only on little more than half what British workers got, the *Daily Worker* reported.

But this act, one of the first of the “People’s Front” government, constituted a massive challenge to the employers.

New rights for workers were resisted by bosses throughout Spain in a sign that many would also defy the democratic authority of the government by supporting the coup on 18 July 1936 that marked the start of the Spanish Civil War.

Another ship involved in the stoppages was the *Eolo* in Aberdeen. An exhibition about the strike is on show at Aberdeen Maritime Museum until 10 September (www.aagm.co.uk/Visit/AberdeenMaritimeMuseum).

Scandinavians celebrate anniversary with ‘A Train to Spain’ project



VENUE: The former Swedish-Norwegian hospital at Alcoi.

A group of artists and historians from Denmark, Finland, Norway and Sweden have launched “A Train to Spain”, described as “an international, travelling cross-media project dedicated to the memories of the Scandinavian volunteers who went to Spain 80 years ago during the civil war of 1936-1939”.

Participants set off in August on a journey through Europe, from Finland to Spain. Along the way they are organising various screenings, meetings, seminars and pop-up exhibitions.

“We hope to create discussion not only about the fates of the bygone volunteers, but also about the current state of our continent, where fascism is again rising in many new forms,” say the organisers.

The opening ceremony of the first Spanish event will take place on 29 September in the gallery of Málaga University, Faculty of Arts (www.uma.es), where the “A Train to Spain” exhibition will remain until 12 October.

A special event will then take place in Albacete on 14 October, where the 80th anniversary of the creation of

the International Brigades will be marked in conjunction with the Cedobi International Brigades research centre based in the city.

From 24 October the exhibition is scheduled to go to Alcoi, where there will also be film screenings in the historic building of the Hospital of Alcoi.

After the tour, the organisers plan to publish a book, a web-based documentary and several articles about the project.

For more information, see the website [www.atraintospain.com].



All photos: Hope Not Hate

LAUNCHES: Grace Petrie (above) plays at Ye Olde Rose and Crown in Walthamstow at the London launch of Brigadista Ale on 20 May. There was a Manchester launch one week earlier, at which Joe Solo (above right) performed at the Kings Arms in Salford. The event was sponsored by Thompsons Solicitors, while the sponsor of the London evening was transport workers' union RMT, whose Assistant General Secretary, Steve Hedley, addressed those present (pictured right).

Proud to brew a beer for the brave volunteers who went to Spain

LOUISE WALKER of Blackhill Brewery of Stanley, County Durham, describes the launch in May of Brigadista Ale, brewed to mark the 80th anniversary this year of the formation of the International Brigades. Proceeds go to the IBMT and Hope Not Hate.

The launch of Brigadista Ale was a huge day for us. When we were approached to make Brigadista, we thought it would be a small one-off brew, but were delighted to help. We had no idea what it was about to become and that people would be so interested.

We're a tiny microbrewery in County Durham. This is a special commemoration and justly deserved, a huge up.

But to say the last couple of weeks have had a few downs... Our hours have been ridiculous, so much so Chris [the brewery owner] was seriously considering sleeping at the brewery.

The work has been bad enough, but chasing bottles you thought would be done, and then malt arriving over a week late, are certainly downs. Not sure Chris will be relishing the idea of a back-to-back brew. The Cardiff pre-launch went well and feed-back was good, another up.

Started

When we started I knew little about the Spanish Civil War, but have learnt a lot and find it totally fascinating, and when I finally get a few days will read more.

The brewery and all of us are working to full capacity and none of this would be possible without amazing support from families and the person that asked us to brew it; so much so, I'll probably miss his daily barrage of texts, yet another up.

The challenges we are dealing with are nothing compared to those faced by the brave men and women we are commemorating, and the pride we feel is yet another up.

So thank you to those that gave us the opportunity, and when you find it, raise a glass and think of those that gave their lives for freedom.

No pasarán!

This article is taken from Louise Walker's blog at www.blackhillbrewery.com/blackhill-brewery-blog.



How to order Brigadista Ale



Bottles of Brigadista Ale can be mail-ordered from specialist beer retailer [Drinkswell](http://www.drinkswell.co.uk) in Ripon. See: [\[www.drinkswell.co.uk/products/o/Beers/English.html\]](http://www.drinkswell.co.uk/products/o/Beers/English.html).

If you want your local pub or bar to serve pints or bottles

of Brigadista Ale, ask your landlord/lady to contact their distributor and ask for Brigadista Ale from the Blackhill Brewery.

In London and the South East, they can contact distributor AVS (www.avscaskbeers.co.uk/beersandcider), while in Brighton, Portsmouth and Southampton, they need to contact the Gosport-based Oakleaf Brewing Company (www.oakleafbrewing.co.uk).

Distribution in the North-East, North-West and Yorkshire is handled direct by Blackhill Brewery (www.blackhillbrewery.com).

In Wales, the Waen Brewery keeps some stocks: [\[thewaenbrewery.co.uk\]](http://thewaenbrewery.co.uk).

Brigadista Ale merchandise is available from the IBMT and from: [\[http://brigadistaale.co.uk/spanish-civil-war-ale\]](http://brigadistaale.co.uk/spanish-civil-war-ale).



PLEASED: Louise Walker with bottles of Brigadista Ale at Ye Olde Rose and Crown in Walthamstow.

Proposed constitutional changes for the AGM

The Executive Committee is proposing the following amendments to the IBMT's constitution. Their principal aim is to clarify those clauses where there is some ambiguity about meaning, as well as to reduce the quorum required at an Annual General Meeting. This is necessary because of the IBMT's continued membership growth. In addition the EC is proposing a reduction in the maximum number of elected Executive Committee members from 15 to 14, along with an increase in the number of co-opted members from two to three. The IBMT's constitution can be downloaded from the "About" page of our website.

Paragraphs E: Membership

Existing wording

(3) Each member organisation shall appoint an individual to represent it and to vote on its behalf at meetings of the Charity; and may appoint an alternative to replace its appointed representative at any meeting of the Charity if the appointed representative is unable to attend.

Proposed wording

(3) Each member organisation shall appoint an individual to represent it and to vote on its behalf at meetings of the Charity. If that person is already a member of the Charity, they shall be entitled to cast one vote only.

Existing wording

(4) Each member organisation shall notify the name of the representative appointed by it and of any alternative to the Secretary. If the representative resigns from or otherwise leaves the member organisation, he or she shall forthwith cease to be the representative of the member organisation.

Proposed wording

(4) Each member organisation shall notify the name of the representative appointed by it to the Secretary. If the representative resigns from or otherwise leaves the member organisation, he or she shall forthwith cease to be the representative of the member organisation.

Existing wording

(5) The Executive Committee may unanimously and for good reason terminate the membership of any individual or member organisation. Provided that the individual concerned or the appointed representative of the member organisation concerned (as the case may be) shall have the right to be heard by the Executive Committee, accompanied by a friend, before a final decision is made.

Proposed wording

(5) The Executive Committee may, for good reason, terminate the membership of any individual or member organisation, provided that the individual concerned or the appointed

representative of the member organisation concerned (as the case may be) shall have the right to be heard by the Executive Committee, accompanied by a friend, before a final decision is made.

Paragraph G: Executive Committee

Existing wording

(1) The Executive Committee shall consist of not less than five members nor more than 15 members.

The Executive Committee shall be:

- (i) The Honorary Officers specified in the preceding clause;
- (ii) Not less than two and no more than 11 members elected at the Annual General Meeting who shall hold office from the conclusion of that meeting.

Proposed wording

(1) The Executive Committee shall consist of not less than five members nor more than 14 elected members.

The Executive Committee shall be:

- (i) The Honorary Officers specified in the preceding clause;
- (ii) Not less than two and no more than 10 members who shall hold office from the conclusion of that meeting.

Existing wording

(2) The Executive Committee may in addition appoint not more than two co-opted members but so that no one may be appointed as a co-opted member if, as a result, more than one-third of the members of the Executive Committee would be co-opted members. Each appointment of a co-opted member shall be made at a special meeting of the Executive Committee called under clause Q and shall take effect from the end of that meeting unless the appointment is to fill a place which has not then been vacated in which case the appointment shall run from the date when the post became vacant.

Proposed wording

(2) The Executive Committee may in addition appoint not more than three co-opted members but so that no one may be appointed as a co-opted member if, as a result, more than one-third of the members of the Executive Committee would be co-opted members. Each appointment of a co-opted member shall be made at a meeting of the Executive Committee and shall take immediate effect.

Existing wording

(4) The proceedings of the Executive Committee shall not be invalidated by any vacancy among their number or by any failure to appoint or any defect in the appointment or qualification of a member.

Proposed wording

(4) The proceedings of the Executive Committee shall not be invalidated by any vacancy among their number or by any failure to elect or any defect in the election, appointment or qualification of a member.

Existing wording

(5) Nobody shall be appointed as a member of the Executive Committee who is aged under 16 or who would if appointed be disqualified under the provisions of the following clause.

Proposed wording

(5) Nobody shall be elected as a member of the Executive Committee who would if appointed be disqualified under the provisions of the following clause.

Existing wording

(6) No person shall be entitled to act as a member of the Executive Committee whether on a first or on any subsequent entry into office until after signing in the minute book of the Executive Committee a declaration of acceptance and of willingness to act in the trusts of the Charity.

Proposed wording

(6) No person shall be entitled to act as a member of the Executive Committee without a minuted declaration of acceptance and of willingness to act in the trusts of the Charity.

Paragraph J: Meetings and proceedings of the Executive Committee

Existing wording

(1) The Executive Committee shall hold at least two ordinary meetings each year. A special meeting may be called at any time by the Chair or by any two members of the Executive Committee upon not less than four days' notice being given to other members of the Executive Committee of the matters to be discussed but if the matters include the appointment of a co-opted member then not less than 21 days' notice must be given.

Proposed wording

(1) The Executive Committee shall hold at least two ordinary meetings each year. A special meeting may be called at any time by the Chair or by at least a third of the number of members of the Executive Committee upon not less than four days' notice being given to other members of the Executive Committee of the matters to be discussed.

Existing wording

(3) There shall be a quorum when at least a third of the number of members of the Executive Committee for the time being or three members of the Executive Committee, whichever is the greater, are present at a meeting.

Proposed wording

(3) There shall be a quorum when at least a third of the number of the elected members of the Executive Committee are present at a meeting.

Paragraph P: Annual General Meeting

Existing wording

(1) There shall be an Annual General Meeting of the Charity which shall be held in the month of October each year or as soon as practicable thereafter.

Proposed wording

(1) There shall be an Annual General Meeting of the Charity which shall be

held in the month of October of each year or as near as practicable.

Existing wording

(5) Nominations for election to the Executive Committee must be made by members of the Charity in writing and must be in the hands of the Secretary at least 14 days before the Annual General Meeting. Should nominations exceed vacancies, election shall be by ballot.

Proposed wording

(5) Nominations for election to the Executive Committee must be made by members of the Charity in writing and must be returned to an address nominated by the Charity at least 14 days prior to the Annual General Meeting. Should nominations exceed vacancies, election shall be by ballot.

Paragraph Q: Special General Meetings

Existing wording

The Executive Committee may call a Special General Meeting of the Charity at any time. If at least 10 members request such a meeting in writing stating the business to be considered the Secretary shall call such a meeting. At least 21 days' notice must be given. The notice must state the business to be discussed.

Proposed wording

The Executive Committee may call a Special General Meeting of the Charity at any time. If at least 10 percent of members request such a meeting in writing stating the business to be considered, the Secretary shall call such a meeting. At least 21 days' notice must be given. The notice must state the business to be discussed. The Special General Meeting shall take place at 1pm on a Saturday at a premises within a five mile radius of the Charity's registered address.

Paragraph R: Procedure at General Meetings

Existing wording

(2) There shall be a quorum when at least one twentieth of the number of members of the Charity for the time being or 10 members of the Charity, whichever is the greater, are present at any General Meeting.

Proposed wording

(2) There shall be a quorum when at least one twenty-fifth of the number of members of the Charity for the time being or 10 members of the Charity, whichever is the greater, are present at any General Meeting.

Paragraph V: Arrangements until first Annual General Meeting

Existing wording

Until the first Annual General Meeting takes place this Constitution shall take effect as if references in it to the Executive Committee were references to the persons whose signatures appear at the bottom of this document.

Delete entire clause

The Annual General Meeting of the International Brigade Memorial Trust will take place from 2.30pm on Saturday 15 October 2016 in the Connolly Hall, Liberty Hall Theatre, Eden Quay, Dublin 1



Agenda

- (1) Chair's opening remarks
- (2) Apologies for absence
- (3) Approval of minutes of 2015 Annual General Meeting
- (4) Matters arising from 2015 AGM minutes
- (5) Executive Committee's report
- (6) Financial report
- (7) Proposed amendments to the constitution [see panel on left]
- (8) Election of officers and Executive Committee members
- (9) Any other business
- (10) Date and place of next Annual General Meeting
- (11) Chair's closing remarks

● *Nominations for officers (Chair, Secretary and Treasurer) and Executive Committee members (up to 14) must be made in writing and received by the Secretary by 8am on 1 October 2016.*

● *Proposed items for agenda item (9) must be received in writing by the Secretary by 8am on 8 October 2016.*

● *Email: [secretary@international-brigades.org.uk] or write to: IBMT Secretary, 37a Clerkenwell Green, London EC1R 0DU.*

● *For more information about the AGM venue see: [http://libertyhalltheatre.ie].*

Wreath-laying

The Annual General Meeting will be preceded at 2pm by a wreath-laying ceremony at the James Connolly Monument, which is situated opposite Liberty Hall.

Social

An IBMT fund-raising social will take place at 8pm on 15 October in the Teachers' Club, 36 Parnell Square West, Dublin 1. See: [www.clubnamuinteoiri.com/contactus.php] for location information.

Student nurses hail Thora in their fight against cuts



A banner (right) remembering International Brigade nurse Thora Silverthorne (pictured above) was carried by student nurses at a 1,000-strong demonstration in London on 4 June.

The protest was over the government plans to scrap maintenance grants worth £800 million for student nurses. Unions say two-thirds of nurses and midwives wouldn't have studied nursing without them.

Thora Silverthorne (1910-1999), daughter of a Welsh miner, trained to be a nurse in Oxford and London, where she was working when she volunteered to go to Spain in August 1936 – "the prime and best and most important decision I've made in my life".



After returning in September 1937 she went on to found the National Association of Nurses, of which she was later general secretary. The union merged with the National Union of Public Employees, one of the unions

that came together to create Unison.

Silverthorne was also a leading figure in the Socialist Medical Association, which played an important role in the development of the NHS.

In brief

Two Jarama commemorations

There are to be two 80th anniversary commemorations of the Battle of Jarama in February next year. The AABI Spanish International Brigades friendship association is organising a weekend of activities in and around Madrid on 17-19 February for International Brigade supporters from around the world. It will include visits to the battlefield south-east of the capital and to the memorial to the Scottish volunteers in nearby Tarancón. In addition, a gala concert is planned for the Friday evening. On the weekend before, a group of IBMT members from the North West are organising a shorter battlefield tour and a visit to the International Brigade memorial in Madrid's University City. Many trade unionists from the North West and elsewhere are expected to go on this trip. See the Events page of the IBMT website (www.international-brigades.org.uk) for more details.

Name "besmirches" Scottish volunteers

A call has been made to change the name of Bute House, the Scottish First Minister's official residence in Edinburgh, because it is named after John Crichton-Stuart, the 4th Marquess of Bute, a fascist sympathiser who gave money to Franco during the Spanish Civil War. Retired doctor Graham Sharp has written to the National Trust for Scotland, which was given the property in 1956, to

Continued overleaf

IN CARDIFF: There were songs from Cor Cochion Caerdydd (Cardiff Red Choir), poems and floral tributes (right) at the International Brigade memorial in Cardiff on 16 July to commemorate the 200 volunteers from Wales. Mark Drakeford (below), Labour Welsh Assembly Member and Cabinet Secretary for Finance and Local Government in the Welsh Government, paid tribute to the courage and internationalism of the Brigaders and IBMT Wales Secretary Mary Greening (also pictured) helped read out the names of the 36 Welshmen who died in Spain. Other speakers at the event, which was organised by IB Cymru, included Plaid Cymru's Dafydd Trystan Davies, who addressed the gathering in Welsh, English and Spanish.



Photos: Keith Hursthouse





POSTCARDS: Some of the newly digitised images at the Marx Memorial Library.

Our new digitised image cache

By Eliot Smith

During the past year, volunteers at the Marx Memorial Library in London have undertaken the ambitious task of digitalising its large collection of photographs, postcards and other images dating from the Spanish Civil War.

Contained in the library's extensive International Brigades archive, the pictures consist mainly of images of the British Battalion and medical volunteers in Spain.

Also included are many items of publicity and propaganda issued by the Spanish Republican authorities and supporters in Britain and Spain. Many of the images have rarely been seen or ever published.

The medical photographs provide a precious glimpse into the everyday lives of the doctors and nurses who cared for the sick and injured of the conflict. As well as offering grim examples of injuries and treatments from the war, many of the photographs show how the volunteers chose to

relax and spend their free time in the most trying of circumstances.

A number of famous and evocative locations are featured, such as the cave hospital of the Ebro offensive. There are also a number of rare photographs taken of children's colonies where the children evacuated from cities lived and were educated, courtesy of the Spanish Republic.

The library's ambition is to have the whole collection digitalised and available to be accessed by MML members in the future. Furthermore, a selection of poignant images from the collection will be kept online permanently, with members being able to access them from home via the archive's website.

The digital availability of archives such as these will aid in educating those interested in the history of the volunteers during the Spanish Civil War and will help to keep their memory alive.

Eliot Smith is a volunteer at the Marx Memorial Library (www.marxlibrary.org.uk).

In brief

From previous page

say that the memory of the Scots who fought fascism in Spain is "besmirched" by the name of the building currently occupied by Nicola Sturgeon.

Benny Rothman booklet

The Unite education department has published a short biography of union activist and lifelong socialist Benny Rothman. Famous for being an organiser of the 1932 Kinder Trespass, Benny was also a leading light in the Aid Spain movement in Manchester. Click on the April 2016 book of the month at: [www.uniteunion.org/growing-our-union/education/bookofthemoth].

Queues for musical in Madrid

"Goodbye España", the musical about a group of British International Brigaders, opened in



Madrid queues up to see "Goodbye España".

Madrid to full houses and critical acclaim in April. There were weekly performances through the summer at the Teatro Infanta Isabel. Written by Judith Johnson and Karl Lewkowicz, the award-winning musical is more commonly known as "Goodbye Barcelona" and as such was staged with IBMT support at the Arcola Theatre in London in 2011 and more recently at the Teatre del Raval in Barcelona.

All photos: Andrew Ward



Na-mara performing in Jubilee Gardens.

At the IBMT's annual commemoration After 80 years their legacy lives on...

Hundreds of people gathered on London's South Bank on 2 July to pay tribute to the legendary International Brigades.

In poetry, music and words they remembered the 2,500 volunteers from Britain and Ireland who defended the elected Popular Front government of the Spanish Republic against Franco, Hitler and Mussolini. Of these, 526 gave their lives.

Actor Maxine Peake was moved to tears while reading Cecil Day Lewis's "The Volunteer". A line from the poem, "our open eyes could see no other way", is inscribed on the memorial to the International Brigades in Jubilee Gardens, where the IBMT's commemoration took place.

There was music from folk-duo na-mara, Spanish rapper Perro Lobo and the cast of "Dare Devil Rides to Jarama", a new IBMT-commissioned play about the International Brigades by Neil Gore that begins a UK tour in September.

Speakers noted that this was the 80th anniversary of the start of the Spanish Civil War on 18 July 1936.

IBMT Secretary Jim Jump said the volunteers had set an example of international solidarity and of fighting for a just cause that continued to inspire people in campaigns for social justice and against fascism and racism.

Delivering the keynote address, Paul Preston, internationally renowned historian of modern Spain, stressed the deep and lasting emotional and political impact that the civil war had left on all those who had fought on the side of the Spanish Republic.

In all his research into the war he had never stopped being taken aback by the way that ordinary people, under the most daunting conditions, whether facing Luftwaffe bombs or near-starvation, had carried on defending the Republic. The International Brigades had

Cries of “Long live Christ the King!” and “Up with Spain”. Engine noise from a convoy of cars and lorries. Shouts open up a black abyss along the road... an open abyss, a deep wound, deliberately meant never to heal, so that our people would be for ever torn in two.

These were summer days, not so long ago, when nobody believed what they’d heard on the radio about that far-away military coup. Then came men from nearby towns with guns, blood in their eyes, menacing gestures, and in their hands a blank and revengeful piece of paper, ready for a list of names.

This was a war without front-lines, without battles. Life stood still. Taking the villages was more than just shoring up the rearguard. With gusto they set about their task. A line of fire was drawn to separate the “bad” people from the “good”. Street by street, house by house, everyone would be judged. Trust was smothered under a blanket of hysteria, of divine providence.

From the pulpits came the injunctions, the proclamations handed down from on-high: “Choose between the Devil or Spain.” Cowardice was branded as courage, allowing denunciations to be made, triggers to be pulled in this holy crusade to save Spain, vomiting names, filling the death lists of men, women, neighbours who didn’t go to church, who didn’t humour their betters, who spoke out of turn, who read books.

Terror exploded out of nothing, the earth darkened and the light dimmed. The executions began, a liturgy of rifle-shots at dawn. Lives were shattered and decades of rights trampled on by those who couldn’t care less about the sight of corpses scattered in ditches. It was that easy to die, that easy to kill.

Such was the dark system of terror set loose in those days turned into night by black dawns.

“...to hell with anyone who says we have to forget. We will never forget.”

Here there was no war – only groups of men killing unarmed people, their friends from the classroom, the dance hall and the pelota court – all the while averting their eyes and holding their tongues before an abstract foe.

Death-squads collected their nocturnal cargo, those named by the local well-heeled thugs. It was a chillingly effective scheme: “I didn’t pull



David Merino and (right) Maxine Peake.



The fascist reign of terror – described in a rap song

A high-point of the commemoration on 2 July was the performance of a song by DAVID MERINO of the Spanish rap group Perro Lobo. Written by him, “La Rioja 1936” describes the wave of terror launched by the fascists following the military uprising in July 1936 in the northern province of La Rioja where he is from. Maxine Peake then read out this translation.

the trigger, I just named him”, “I didn’t know his name, I just pulled the trigger” – a simple division of labour, a perfect way to commit genocide.

The lists ran out, but had to be replenished.

The spiral of massacres spun faster still.

Soon blood-lust took over, so did jostling for position, entertainment and showing-off. Individuals count for nothing, only the group now master of the night – a master with absolute power. Fired up with alcohol, testosterone and gun-powder, the exterminating beast roared and the killing continued.

There were months of mass slaughter, unexpected but unspontaneous – a massacre plotted by the military high command and blessed by the Church hierarchy.

They didn’t kill randomly, only those who questioned the established order of work and property. And they made sure the tortured corpses would be seen by others, warning them not to follow the same path – dumping bodies at daybreak on the land controlled by the old

guard, protecting feudal privileges, making it clear that some thoughts were unthinkable.

And the families and widows were called scum, and sentenced to live in eternal terror. Torture, castor oil, shaven heads, stripped of their belongings and land. They were robbed even of their pain, not even able to mourn in black, nor whisper to the bones, condemned to suffocate in the poisonous fear of each memory.

Over the mass graves and the silence of the bereaved emerged Franco’s new Spanish state, like a colossal stigma. And the bitter rain of blood of those years remains in our earth. The bodies are still in our earth. The fascist beast prevailed, but the wounds of death will not heal.

History is blowing in the wind and written in the books, and to hell with anyone who says we have to forget. We will not forget, we’ll never forget, never forget.

Translation by Jim Jump.

See [<https://perroloboband.com>].

displayed “amazing solidarity” in continuing the fight, Preston added, as did Spaniards because of what the Republic had done for them, especially in the fields of education and women’s rights.

Other speakers included IBMT Patron Rodney Bickerstaffe, who welcomed the presence of so many banners at the event, including those of the train divers’ union ASLEF, the Durham miners and the TUC Southern and Eastern Region.

Almudena Cros, President of the Madrid-based Association of Friends of the International

Brigades (AABI), made an impassioned plea for the volunteers’ spirit of internationalism to be maintained in today’s Europe.

Wreaths were laid by representatives of the Catalan government, Spanish exiles, the Association of Jewish Ex-Servicemen and Women and other trade union and political groups. IBMT Patron Baroness Royall of Blaisdon laid the wreath on behalf of the Trust.

See videos of the event: [www.youtube.com/user/IBMTnews].



Rhiannon Meades and Neil Gore sang songs from “Dare Devil Rides to Jarama”.

New location is being sought for Oxford memorial

By Colin Carritt

Our project is to have a permanent memorial in Oxford to the 31 men and women from Oxfordshire who went to Spain to defend the Spanish Republic during the civil war of 1936-39.

Oxford City Council have made it clear that they would not consent to our memorial being sited next to the world war memorial in St Giles. This follows a barrage of objections from representatives of the Catholic Church in particular and other individuals who thought that the defeat of fascism in Spain was somehow less worthy than the defeat of fascism in Germany and Japan.

However, the city council are at pains to express their support for the concept of a memorial to the Oxfordshire volunteers who went to Spain and have provided encouragement in the shape of offers of financial and practical support.

The proposal now is to site the memorial on the large grass triangle at the bottom of Headington Hill. This is adjacent to South Parks, now the foremost venue for major city events. The council have suggested that the opportunity be taken to re-focus what has until recently been a rather windswept area and to enhance it perhaps with seating, floral displays and other attractions centred on the International Brigade memorial.

We are now looking at modifications to the design to take account of the new setting.

Colin Carritt is the secretary of the IBMT Oxford memorial committee. For up-to-date news about the project for a memorial in Oxford see [www.sustainablewoodstock.co.uk/ibmt.html]. "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.



Sculptor Charlie Carter's proposal for the Oxford memorial names the six local men who died in Spain.



DIRECTOR: Ken Loach (second from left) answers questions during the panel discussion following the screening. Also pictured are James Riding (left) of Magdalen College and (from right) Colin Carritt and Edward Ayres of the IBMT.

Ken Loach attends IBMT benefit screening of 'Land and Freedom'

Film director Ken Loach attended a fund-raising screening on 10 June in Oxford of his seminal and controversial Spanish Civil War film "Land and Freedom" (1995).

Fresh from his latest triumph at the Cannes Film Festival, where he won the Palme d'Or for his new film "I, Daniel Blake", Loach took part in a 40-minute question and answer session after the screening at Magdalen College.

Others on the Q&A panel were Colin Carritt and Ed Ayres of the IBMT Oxfordshire memorial committee and Magdalen Film Society President James Riding.

Jointly organised by the IBMT and Magdalen Film Society, the event raised more than £1,000 for the IBMT's Oxford memorial appeal.

Though a highly critically acclaimed film, "Land and Freedom" is a controversial work for many IBMT supporters. This is because of its focus on conflict among anti-Franco forces, which might leave viewers believing that the Spanish Republic lost the war because of internal divisions.

In addition, the film contains a historically inaccurate portrayal of International Brigaders firing on a dissident militia unit at the Aragon front.

During the panel discussion in Oxford Ken Loach was asked whether he would plan anything different for the film now.

He answered by saying that he would have given more emphasis to the role of Britain and France in undermining the Republic through "non-intervention" and would have

highlighted the pro-fascist sentiment of the British establishment.

Talking more generally about the making of the film, he said that Manchester-born Jim Allen, his co-scriptwriter, had been very much at the heart of the project, a man steeped in mining culture and "political down to his fingertips".

Granddaughter

At the beginning of the film, the young granddaughter of a recently deceased volunteer in Spain is seen examining her grandfather's belongings and sorting through some magazines from the 1930s. Amongst them we see the title of a mining journal that Allen had worked on.

Loach's reflections on Allen were both funny and endearing, according to Ed Ayres. "Ken recounted the scriptwriter's appearance at Cannes for the premiere of "Land and Freedom" in 1995. Unable to secure a black tie and suit for the opening ceremony, Allen enlisted the services of a local Manchester villain to provide the necessary formal attire.

Unfortunately the recently acquired trousers were ludicrously short, and Ken recalled the sight of Jim on the red carpet at Cannes with a black tie but with trousers so short they were well up above his shins.

Colin Carritt, of the Oxfordshire IBMT, commented: "It was incredibly generous of Ken to take time out to come to Oxford. It is a tremendous boost to our campaign to have someone of his stature endorse our plans."



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

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SECRETARIAL NOTES

Why no mention of the Brigades?

By Jim Jump

On 29 May *The Observer* ran a 4,000-word feature on moves in Spain to come to terms with its civil war past. Astonishingly for such a lengthy piece there was no mention of the International Brigades. On behalf of the IBMT I wrote the following letter.

"What a shame that Julian Coman didn't find space in his three-page article, 'Eighty years on, Spain may at last be able to confront the ghosts of civil war', to mention the 2,500 men and women from the British Isles who joined the International Brigades to fight on the side of Spain's elected Popular Front government.

"More than 500 of them died in Spain, an astonishing sacrifice at a time when their government at home was intent on appeasing

"Could it be that the exploits of an Eton-educated man of the establishment are thought to be more important...?"

fascism. Yet George Orwell, one of a few dozen British volunteers in a revolutionary communist militia, gets multiple mentions.

"Could it be that the exploits of an Eton-educated man of the establishment are thought to be more important than those of the brave miners, nurses, shipyard workers, dockers, East End garment workers and others who gave their lives in the cause of anti-fascism?"

PS: The letter wasn't published.

Marlene, take a bow

Andrew Wiaard



The talents of Marlene Sidaway (pictured) are not confined to being the IBMT's exemplary President and founding Secretary from 2001-2010. She is also a busy and accomplished actor, as many IBMT members may have noticed from TV and theatre listings lately.

Her recent TV appearances include the BBC sitcom "Mum", in which she played Maureen. Starring Lesley Manville, the comedy ran for six weeks through to 17 June, with Marlene featuring in three of the episodes.

Then on 29 May she appeared alongside Kenneth Branagh in an episode of BBC1's popular "Wallander" series of crime stories centred on the

exploits of the eponymous Swedish detective.

Marlene is also in a new drama by Mike Poulton, "Kenny Morgan", which was at the Arcola Theatre in London in May and June and returns there in the autumn. The play is about people who inspired Terence Rattigan to write "The Deep Blue Sea".

Emilio Aldecoa blazed a trail

The story might be familiar to many IBMT members, but it was nonetheless good to see the *Morning Star's* Steve Sweeney mentioning (in "The football world unites around refugees", 15 June) the tale of the nearly 4,000 refugee children who came from northern Spain during the Spanish Civil War to find sanctuary in Britain from Franco's bombs.

Among those "children of Guernica" on the *Habana*, the ship that brought them from Bilbao to Southampton in May 1937, was Emilio Aldecoa, then aged 14. He later blazed the trail for the likes of David Silva, Cesc Fàbregas, David de Gea and other Spaniards who play professional football in England.

Emilio (pictured below) became the first Spaniard in top-flight football in England. Aged



20, he signed for Wolverhampton Wanderers in 1943. He was transferred to Coventry City in 1945, and after three seasons returned to Spain to play for his beloved Athletic Bilbao, later moving to Real Valladolid and after-

wards Barcelona, where he won the league title and the Copa Latina in the early 1950s.

According to a letter in 1946 from the exiled Spanish Republican authorities to the Football Association in London (held at the Modern Records Centre at Warwick University), Aldecoa was also picked for a Spanish Republican side that played two games against a Swiss national team earlier that year. He was the lone exile in Britain, with all his team-mates playing for French first division clubs.

Cantona on target again

Still on the football theme, there were welcome words from France's Eric Cantona when he invoked his Spanish Republican heritage in an interview in *The Guardian* on 24 May.

The former Manchester United star recalled that his grandparents on his father's side had fled from Franco at the end of the Spanish Civil War and spent a year in a refugee camp in Argelès-sur-Mer.

Cantona had recently sought to deliver on a promise to help refugees similarly afflicted. "I give a small house, it's not a castle. But it's in a great part of Marseille, with around 200 square metres of garden," he told the newspaper.

He added: "We renovated it, we had it painted. We bought all the furniture, all the plates. I didn't take a picture with them [the Syrian refugee family] and put it on Facebook or Twitter. I'm not this kind of person. If you hadn't

Continued overleaf



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SECRETARIAL NOTES

From previous page

asked, I wouldn't have told you. But I said I would do that, in the hope that other people who can do it will do it. Some of the people who like to speak, the actors and so on, they are all from the left side but they don't give anything."

Definitely no comment!

From Kevin Maguire's diary in the *New Statesman* of 12 May...

"*Corbynistas assembling outside the trendy Brigade bar in London Bridge to toast [Sadiq Khan's victory [as London Mayor] recoiled at my suggestion that they might be dubbed a "Red Brigade". "Let's settle on International Brigade," said one staffer. Appropriate – if risky, should Labour divisions mirror splits on the Republican side in the Spanish Civil War. It wouldn't be too much of a stretch to imagine Jeremy Corbyn with the anarchist POUM militia and John McDonnell as a Moscow-backed rival...*"

Liverpool salutes a supporter of Spain



Congratulations to everyone involved in the series of events in Liverpool this year celebrating the life of one its most famous radical campaigners, Eleanor Rathbone (1872-1946).

As well as being an early activist for women's suffrage and serving as an independent on Liverpool City Council for 35 years and afterwards as an MP, Rathbone was an outspoken critic of appeasement and a strong supporter of the Spanish Republic during the Spanish Civil War.

In April 1937 she went to Spain on a fact-finding mission with Ellen Wilkinson and the Duchess of Atholl and was horrified by the suffering caused by Franco's bombing of civilian targets. On her return to Britain she joined others to establish the Dependents Aid Committee to raise money for International Brigade families. Later she would help establish the National Joint Committee for Spanish Relief and campaigned for refugees from Spain – as well as from Czechoslovakia and Germany – to be allowed entry to Britain.

Dave Hopper: a friend of the IBMT

How sad to learn of the sudden death on 16 July of Dave Hopper, General Secretary of the Durham Miners' Association, at the age of 73. Others will rightly pay tribute to his immense standing in the trade union movement. But we should also note that he was a great supporter of the IBMT and the memory of the volunteers from the North East. The DMA's Miners' Hall in Durham hosted our Annual General Meeting in 2009, where a plaque to the volunteers was unveiled. And just two weeks before his untimely death, Dave was with us on London's South Bank, with the Durham miners' banner, at our annual commemoration.

Jim Jump

secretary@international-brigades.org.uk

International Brigade Memorial Trust

DARE DEVIL RIDES TO JARAMA

A new play by Neil Gore

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



Excellent
The Morning Star



Wonderful
The Times



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.



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- 6 - 7 Lowry Salford
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- 11 Guildhall Derby
- 12-15 Oldham Coliseum
- 18 Quorn Grange Hotel, Quorn, Leicestershire
- 19 Peterborough Trades Council
- 20 Chilwell Arts Centre Beeston
- 21 The Lansdown Hall Stroud
- 22 The Seagull, Lowestoft
- 24 - 29 The Bussey Building Peckham
- 30 The Marx Memorial Library London (extracts & songs)

NOVEMBER

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



Clem Beckett

Christopher Caudwell



NOVEMBER

- 11 Withal Hall, Barnard Castle
- 12 Cast Doncaster
- 13 Severn Theatre Shrewsbury
- 14 - 19 Lantern Theatre Sheffield
- 22 - 23 St Michaels Irish Centre, Liverpool
- 25 Assembly Rooms, Barton
- 26 Swanland Village Hall.

DECEMBER

- 30 The Place Bedford
- 1 Square Chapel Halifax
- 2 Hat Factory Luton
- 3 Ruskin College Oxford



C. H. "DAREDEVIL" BECKETT, O.M.

In the early hours of Sunday 19 July 1936, the last peacetime train to Barcelona made its way along Spain's coast. From his carriage window the *Daily Worker* reporter Frank Pitcairn heard Spanish youths shouting: "Shooting! Barcelona!" By the time the train neared the city cries of "Long live democracy! Long live the Republic!" thundered up and down its corridors. Barcelona, still echoing to the sound of gunfire, was crowded with people silently listening to radio bulletins from the loudspeakers of the pavement cafés and bars.

Against the large numbers of people soon scrambling to get out of Spain, a few pushed determinedly the other way: "Germans, Italians, Swiss, Austrians, Dutch, a few Americans", reported Pitcairn (real name Claud Cockburn), and a handful of British. "All languages are spoken... an indescribable atmosphere of political enthusiasm... absolute confidence in speedy success."

Some were already in Spain for the People's Olympiad that had been planned as a counterfoil to the Berlin Olympics hosted by Nazi Germany. Others made their own way to Barcelona and sometimes straight to the front.

By mid-August three tailors from Stepney, Nat Cohen, Sam Masters and Alec Sheller, and artist Felicia Browne had passed through the Karl Marx Barracks in Barcelona. Masters was now at the front and the poet John Cornford had enlisted in the militia of the revolutionary POUM (Partido Obrero de Unificación Marxista) in Lecina.

The British consulate was reporting to the Secret Intelligence Service the presence of "known British Communists", including Tom Wintringham.

It was common for individuals to move between militia units of their own volition – mostly for practical reasons. On 18 August the Thälmann-Gruppe were approached by two Germans and Sam Masters, who asked to join them, as they had lost contact with their own unit in the fighting.

A major deployment of troops from the Karl Marx Barracks was delayed. Felicia Browne transferred to another that was ready to move. In Tardienta, 100 miles from Barcelona, in Aragon, she volunteered for a "shock unit" and died behind enemy lines alongside the Italian comrade she had tried to help.

Nat Cohen went on an ill-fated expedition to Mallorca, as did the young Richard Kisch and his friends. Back in Barcelona Cohen and Tom Wintringham established the Tom Mann Centuria;

Not such a quiet front

Volunteers in Aragon during the early months of the war in Spain

Many anti-fascists made their way to Spain before the formation of the International Brigades in October 1936. Most served with the militia units on the Aragon front. A few, such as Felicia Browne – the first British casualty in Spain – and John Cornford and Tom Wintringham, who both later joined the International Brigades, are already well known. Several more are less so, as **MARSHALL MATEER** describes here.



From left: Eva Laufer and husband Hans Sitigg, Emmanuel Julius, Bill Peel (in the Durham Light Infantry in 1939) and Greville Texidor, probably in 1936 at Tossa de Mar.



Kisch was wounded and invalided home.

In Barcelona an agency reporter scanning the crowds waiting to sign for the POUM militia saw Bill Peel. Standing 6ft 6ins and weighing 16 stone, he must have stood out even more than George Orwell would do three months later. Secretary of his Labour Party branch and Spanish relief committee, Peel had been sent to Spain to write a report on the situation there. At home his mother fretted for his well-being, while his father, a cotton magnate, was opposed to his son's politics, though he "admired his courage".

He joined a workers' militia, but Peel himself, a direct descendent of Prime Minister Sir Robert Peel, was "depressed about his ancestry".

William Martin delivered an ambulance, funded

by the Independent Labour Party, to Barcelona.

Amongst those on board when the vehicle went on to Tierz in Aragon was a young German volunteer Eva Laufer, who later settled in Britain. Before an attack on Huesca she recalled: "We were given rum in our coffee and marijuana cigarettes" but "neither affected me... I was terrified!"

Martin, who had army experience, joined an anarchist column and was immediately put in charge of an artillery unit.

On 20 September in Hyde Park thousands gathered for the "The March of English People's History". They greeted Richard Kisch with a great cheer. They stood in silence while a portrait of Felicia Browne passed, her story already part of the wider narrative.

Marshall Mateer



“Miss Felicia Browne, the artist, was in the ranks of the government army and she was killed,” Willie Gallagher informed the House of Commons during the first full parliamentary debate on Spain (29 October). “Let us face up to this question, which is of significance to the whole of Europe, and make sure that victory goes to the people’s government.”

The *Evening Telegraph* had informed its readers that the British government was making every effort at “ensuring non-intervention in Spain”. Steps to prevent volunteers from leaving Britain were under “active consideration”.

The high plateau of Aragon has its own climate: glaring sun and radiating heat; biting cold and permeating damp. At the British hospital at Grañén, Kenneth Sinclair-Loutit noted that “treatment [for] wet, cold and exposure in the Sierra Alcubierre was our main task for several days”. “It was very cold,” Laufer recalled, “and we were given long underpants.” Winter was setting in – a last chance to attack.

Greville Texidor, originally from Wolverhampton, joined the POUM militia. She and her partner Werner Droscher took part in the Battle of Almodévar (November 1936) in the Italian Rosselli Brigade.

They reached the barbed wire entanglements on the town’s edge but were beaten back. The attack, a carefully planned operation, was launched at daybreak across a wide arc of the front. But the promised planes did not arrive till the afternoon after the ground troops had already attacked. The artillery made some mark, but for a period fired on its own troops. The backup promised by the communist forces for the Italian brigade did not materialise; and a flanking unit became lost in the hills during the night.

Perhaps worst of all, communication between the different sections and the command during the two days was intermittent, confused and often non-existent.

As Texidor and Droscher were under fire, a few miles further along the ridge Nat Cohen and Sam Masters, in the communist militia, were storming “The Hermitage”, a fortified machine-gun placement on a promontory which commanded the region. It had been fought over many times.

The attack failed, the casualties were high and Wintringham’s angry cry: “That bloody Hermitage!” carried all the way back to Britain.



Cohen and Masters were amongst the wounded taken to Grañén.

Aragon is often described as “a quiet front”. John Cornford used the phrase as a refrain in a poem: “This is a quiet sector of a quiet front.” Ralph Bates, with years in Spain, saw beneath the surface and sensed the “grim tranquility” of the region.

In the Spanish Civil War visitors’ centre at Robres a memorial records 8,500 names spelled out in pure white on a stark red ground – those from the Los Monegros region who died in this quiet

“He was leading an attack on a machine-gun nest and was killed in the fight that followed... He said he wanted to be with the boys when they captured Huesca.”

front between 1936 and 1946 (the end of guerrilla activities in the region).

On his return home William Martin implored his comrades at Ruislip-Norwood Labour Party: “Unless [it] was stopped in Spain it would happen to this country,” and Bill Peel called on the labour

movement “to oppose utterly the present policy of the National Government”. Peel joined the Durham Light Infantry and died fighting in France in 1940, one of those who fought fascism three times: on the streets in Britain, in Spain and on a Second World War battleground.

Emmanuel “Manny” Julius was part of the first British Medical Unit: young, Jewish, a member of the Communist Party and enthusiastic to get to Spain, though “disgruntled” with his role as quartermaster. To one colleague he “seemed second rate and rather schizoid”. He drove an ambulance but was sometimes “reckless”.

Julius “deserted” from the medical unit, joined a military column and was killed in action in the Sierra de Robres. Irish volunteer Bill Scott remembered: “A friend of mine named Julius, a Londoner, was killed on the 8th of October. He was leader of a Column although only twenty-four. He was leading an attack on a machine-gun nest and was killed in the fight that followed. I was talking to him three days before he died. He was on leave in Barcelona and went back to the front of his own accord. He said he wanted to be with the boys when they captured Huesca.”

Marshall Mateer is the IBMT Film Coordinator. He welcomes any information about those mentioned in the article or other early volunteers. He plans to publish a longer article in a paper about the first volunteers to arrive in Spain. Email [marshall.mateer@btinternet.com].





Jim Carmody: ‘unsung hero of International Brigade research’

By Jim Jump

All Jim Carmody’s colleagues and many friends in the IBMT were greatly saddened to learn of his death in London on 3 August at the age of 74.

As the IBMT Researcher, Jim was a deeply knowledgeable source of information about the individual volunteers from Britain and Ireland who joined the International Brigades. Queries about the Brigaders directed to the IBMT, from members and public alike, were thus nearly always referred to him.

Jim will be a hard act to follow, and his death

is likely to give impetus to the IBMT’s ambition to see the creation of an online biographical database – based largely on his many years of research – of those 2,500 men and women who went to Spain.

Belfast-born Jim kept files on all the volunteers, each containing details gleaned from the IBMT’s digital copy of the British Battalion archive held in the Russian state archives in Moscow. These were supplemented by an extensive collection of newspaper cuttings, book references and copies of documents and data from the Marx Memorial Library, the National Archives and other sources.

His records covered not only members of the British Battalion, but also the volunteers in Canadian and US battalions of the XV Brigade, and he helped many researchers in those countries who wanted to know more about the International Brigades.

All this he did for the love of it and in a quiet and unassuming manner, having developed a passion for the Spanish Civil War and the story of the International Brigades from an earlier interest in warplanes.

Jim left school at the age of 14 and soon joined the merchant navy. In 1961 he moved to London and worked for more than 25 years in the building trade, until a workplace injury forced him to take a desk job with Kensington & Chelsea borough council.

As an International Brigades enthusiast and record-keeper he gave advice and help to several authors and historians in their research. Among them were IBMT Chair Richard Baxell, who wrote “Unlikely Warriors” (2012) about the British volunteers, and other leading British experts on the International Brigades and Spanish Civil War, including Tom Buchanan,

Helen Graham, Gerald Howson and Paul Preston.

In a tribute following Jim Carmody’s death, Richard Baxell said he was the “unsung hero of International Brigade research”.

He added: “I first met Jim in 1996, when I was an MA student at the University of London. He was sitting in a quiet corner of the Marx Memorial Library, working methodically through lists of volunteers from the Interna-

“His diligence and meticulous attention to detail have become legendary, not just in the UK, but also in Spain, the US and in many other countries besides”

tional Brigades, trying to collate them all into one universal list. Using documents from archives in London, Salamanca, Moscow and beyond, Jim eventually established a record-card index of volunteers from Britain and Ireland to which all historians refer.

“It was, in some respects, his life’s work. Over the last 30 years very few weeks have gone by without Jim ringing to tell me, in his distinctive Belfast accent, of the latest nugget of information he’d found, often in some obscure out-of-print book, or distant local newspaper. His diligence and meticulous attention to detail have become legendary, not just in the UK, but also in Spain, the US and in many other countries besides.”



David Leach: film-maker and IBMT Trustee

By Jim Jump

The death of film-maker and former IBMT Trustee David Leach was reported in June. David was well known in IBMT circles for his

2001 documentary “Voices from a Mountain”. The film centres on the rediscovery of a memorial to the International Brigades in the Sierra Pandols. It had been raised during the Battle of the Ebro in 1938 and had survived seemingly undetected throughout the Franco dictatorship.

Directed by Andrew M Lee, the film features interviews with Brigaders John Dunlop, Sol Frankel, Jack Jones, George Wheeler and Alan Menai Williams.

David Leach went on to organise the erection in 2005 of a plaque on top of Hill 705 near Gandesa naming 90 members of the British Battalion killed in the Battle of the Ebro.

More recently, he helped the IBMT maintain contact with Stan Hilton, the last surviving British International Brigader, who emigrated to Australia in the 1960s. David visited him in nursing homes in Yarrowonga in northern Victoria and at Ocean Grove, near Melbourne.

Born in London in 1968, Leach was elected to the IBMT Executive Committee in 2003, stepping down two years later in order to spend more time in Catalonia, where he had a house, and Australia, where he had studied in

the late 1970s and where his family had settled.

Writing to a friend in November 2015, he said: “You say that ‘Voices from a Mountain’ changed your life; it changed mine too. I had written my BA history honours dissertation in Melbourne on the local campaign for support of the Spanish Republic. The interest stayed with me.

“Researching the life of a Dorset volunteer – I lived here for a while – who was killed in the wake of Jarama, I met George Wheeler. He was the inspiration for the film. It was two years of work. George went to Spain with Jack Jones, who was a comrade of my maternal grandfather in the TGWU [Transport & General Workers’ Union], and Melbourne boy Kevin Rebecchi, the only ‘British’ volunteer who died in Spain and has a known grave.

“I have a photo of young Rebecchi in Spain standing next to the London-born Melbourne volunteer Lloyd Edmonds. I was introduced to him by my thesis supervisor; Lloyd, a quiet retired school teacher, became my mentor.”

“Voices from a Mountain” is available on YouTube (search for the title) and can be viewed in four parts.

80th anniversary of the Battle of Lopera Death and confusion among the olive groves

Extracts from the memoirs of International Brigader **SAM LESSER** in which he recalls the Battle of Lopera, fought 80 years ago in December 1936. Injured in the fighting, he was one of the many casualties in the battle, which saw the death of two renowned writers, John Cornford and Ralph Fox. Lesser's memoir is reproduced here, for the first time in print, by courtesy of the Lesser family.

The battle at Lopera was perhaps the smallest of the bitter battles against fascism in Spain, and the shortest in duration, but it was crucial nevertheless. And in the record of the British volunteers in Spain, it was a baptism of fire.

Earlier in the fighting in Madrid's University City, the Casa de Campo and Boadilla del Monte, the first two groups of British volunteers had helped defeat Franco's first attempt to take Madrid. The survivors of those groups, and they were few, were then withdrawn to the International Brigade base at Albacete. But by Christmas 1936 a critical situation had arisen in Andalusia, where the fascist general Queipo de Llano was directing a general offensive from Córdoba and Granada.

To deal with this emergency it was decided that the formation of a complete English-speaking battalion would have to be delayed and the No.1 Company of 145 men, including the [Madrid] survivors John Cornford, Jock Cunningham, Joe Hinks, Joe Clarke, Edward Burke and myself, were detailed to form part of the French 12th Battalion, later called the Marseillaise, and part of the 14th International Brigade commanded by the Polish General Walter – Karol Swierczewski.

That No.1 Company, which included English, Irish, Scots and Welsh volunteers, most of whom of course would not accept being called "the English company", but they were inevitably called "los ingleses" because they all spoke English. The company, as part of the British Battalion, was later given the title of the Major Attlee Company in honour of the Labour Party leader when he visited the battalion. The company was commanded by the legendary George Nathan, later killed at the Battle of Brunete [in July 1937].

One night [in December 1936] the word went round that the fascists had broken through on the Córdoba front and everybody, cooks, the lot, was taken to the local railway station at Albacete, put on a train and sent across Spain to a place called Andújar, where we detrained.

As we were getting out of the trains we came under attack from the air – machine-gunned from the aircraft – and I remember our first casualty at

that time was a man from the East End who had been at Cable Street – Harry Segal. He was killed as he was getting out. I saw him as he was hit and his body fell to the ground.

We underwent more training at Andújar, then went on trucks to the front. There was a very bitter battle at a town called Lopera and, personally, I was not in very good shape, although I had survived Madrid. But we advanced there, as ordered.

As we advanced we came under very heavy fire



SAM (MANASSAH) LESSER, also known as Sam Russell, was studying Egyptology at University College London when he decided to go to Spain to join the International Brigades. As part of an English-speaking unit in the mainly Marseillaise Battalion, he took part in the defence of Madrid in November 1936 before being sent south to the Córdoba front in December. Badly injured he was repatriated to England, but soon returned to work as a journalist, first for the Republican government and afterwards for the *Daily Worker*. After the Spanish Civil War he pursued a career as a journalist, becoming Foreign Editor of the *Daily Worker*, later the *Morning Star*. He was a founder member of the IBMT and was the Trust's Chair at the time of his death in October 2010 at the age of 95. He is pictured above in Spain and at an IBMT commemoration in London's Jubilee Gardens.



Olive trees on the Lopera battlefield.

and had to keep our heads down. I did my best but, not far from me, John Cornford and Ralph Fox were killed. There were heavy casualties, and I was wounded. I didn't know at the time where I'd been wounded – in which part of my body – except that when I tried to get up I couldn't. I just fell down – there was something wrong with my legs.

Our losses during the battle were heavy. It was not only arms that we lacked in that Battle at Lopera – and much of the armaments we did have seemed to have come from a museum. We also lacked a proper medical service and our wounded from that battle, myself included, had to be taken away in farm carts at first and then in open trucks. Nor shall I ever forget as I lay there hearing the calls during the night of "icamillero!" and "brancardier!", the Spanish and French words for stretcher-bearer.

Fortunately for me, my comrade Jock Cunningham managed to drag me clear from the crest of the hill where I was caught and he helped me along until we found a cart.

It was a long time later that I was told that people started looking for me, and Jock Cunningham, who'd been with the Argyle and Sutherland Highlanders, had become a great friend of mine during the Battle of Madrid, said he was going out to look for me. Apparently they said: "It's no use, Jock, he's a dead 'un, a goner, and if you go out you'll be a goner too." Jock, to his credit, said he was going anyway. He looked around and found me – then literally dragged me in, because he couldn't find a stretcher.

I'd got a bullet in my left leg, and also in my back – because I had an early encounter with what in World War II came to be called "friendly fire". Our French comrades, who were on our right flank to support our advance, were sending over cross-fire. We had apparently advanced too quickly and when they saw us they opened fire.

The biggest surprise came when, at the end of a journey through the night, we [the injured] finished up at what turned out to be

Continued overleaf



Plaque to the International Brigades unveiled in Lopera in April this year.

Battle of Lopera

From previous page

a hospital in the town of Linares de Jaén, at that time a lead and silver mining town controlled by the British company Rio Tinto.

As we were taken from the trucks we saw a huge crowd packing a courtyard of the hospital and they cheered as we were lifted off and taken into the hospital where we were to be

Gavin Fox (left), nephew of Ralph Fox, reads his uncle's last letter from Spain at a commemoration in April in front of the memorial in Lopera to John Cornford and Ralph Fox.



nursed by Spanish “sisters of mercy”, nuns who were devoted to their duty. But the following day we were in for a bigger surprise when, as it seemed to us, the wards were packed by ordinary men and women bringing gifts of all sorts from elementary things like tooth brushes and tooth paste, soap, combs, underwear, pyjamas and trays and trays of succulent Spanish pastries and bottles of sweet Málaga wine.

Later when some of us had recovered sufficiently to go into town we discovered that it was impossible to buy a drink or a meal, for the people insisted on treating us as guests.

At that time I could not get out but some of the Irish comrades did, and Joe Monks told me that there was a so-called British consul in Linares who was chatting up some of our people and encouraging them to desert.

As soon as I was equipped with crutches I went to the office of what is called an “honorary vice-consul”, a local inhabitant recruited by the Foreign Office to look after British interests in the area. In his office this man was blatantly displaying on his wall pictures of Hitler and Mussolini. I gave him a piece of my mind – but by then he had managed to organise the desertion of a couple of our people.

After Lopera, the No.1 Company and the 14th Brigade, as well as the Marseillaise Battalion, took part in other engagements at Las Rozas and Majadahonda.

When the company returned to Albacete the 67 survivors of the 145 men who had left the base were given a heroes’ welcome.

We had left our finest under the olive trees on what used to be called Calvary Hill around Lopera, as we were to leave so many more at Jarama and Brunete, Teruel and Belchite.

See also: www.international-brigades.org.uk/content/lopera-honours-its-international-brigades.

Historian **ANGELA JACKSON** looks at how Manchester women such as Madge Addy and Bessie Berry played their part in efforts to help Spain

Bessie Berry and others on the Aid Spain home front

People from all classes in Britain joined the “Aid Spain” groups that sprang up all over the country to send humanitarian help to the Republic. Women often played leading roles on these local and national committees, whereas in the established party political system and the union movement they were largely marginalised. As one Manchester resident, Bessie Berry, pointed out, union meetings were often held in public houses, and she had been “a bit shy about going into pubs in those days”.

In addition, attending evening meetings could be impossible for women who had children to care for, whereas they could help Aid Spain

“...union meetings were often held in public houses, and she had been ‘a bit shy about going into pubs in those days’.”

groups in many different ways, such as collecting tins of milk for refugee children.

Women soon demonstrated that their talents and energies were valuable assets at all levels in the campaigns. A Manchester woman, Winifred Horrocks, played a leading role on the committee of the “Manchester Foodship for Spain”. The group organised an exhibition of Picasso’s “Guernica” in a Manchester motor showroom, entrance sixpence, all proceeds to the foodship, and “Housewife Days” to appeal for gifts of food.

Manchester women also played a crucial role in looking after some of the nearly 4,000 Basque children who came to Britain in 1937 to escape the bombing of Bilbao. No government help with funding was given; all the work of setting up colonies, caring for the children and fund-raising was done by volunteers.

After nearly three years of civil war and with Franco’s victory imminent, the International Brigades, foreign nurses

Madge Addy: forgotten heroine of the wars in Spain and France

Volunteers from all over the world, concerned about the rise of fascism in Europe, went to Spain to join the International Brigades and help the Spanish Republic. Women were able to volunteer as nurses, often serving in improvised hospitals with poor sanitation and short supplies.

One such nurse was Madge Addy, from the Chorlton-cum-Hardy area of Manchester. She arrived in Spain in 1937 and became head nurse at a hospital in an old monastery at Uclès in Castile. Like some of the other British nurses, she was also involved with the fund-raising campaigns back home.

Madge would write detailed letters about the work in the “Manchester Ward” at the hospital in Uclès to the chairman of the North Manchester Spanish Medical Aid Committee.

Her appeals were given national coverage by the *Daily Worker*, with the dramatic headline “Nurse gave her blood to save men of Madrid”, together with a picture of her in a direct arm to arm transfusion with a wounded soldier. This rather haphazard but often effective method for saving lives was to lead to the development of new, improved techniques for the mass collection and preservation of blood by the doctors in the Republican medical services. Their work was to save countless lives in the Second World War.

Meanwhile, as the battles raged on, Madge wrote to say she had become “very much attached” to a Mr Holst, who held an important position at the hospital, and that they intended to marry. “In the meantime,” she wrote, “Spain and the hospital come first. I have pledged myself to both for a year, then I am hoping to be able to turn my thoughts seriously to some kind of happy future...”

As the war progressed, conditions worsened and shortages became more acute. One of Madge’s letters explained: “...the



Madge Addy pictured in the *Daily Worker* on 26 November 1938.

Committee sent out a gross of Izal toilet rolls, but they cannot be used for the purpose they were intended for. The director said to me, ‘Madge, we were very glad indeed for the paper.’ I said, ‘What paper?’ and he said, ‘Well it was really toilet paper, but we are using it in the office, come and see.’”

Her pleas became desperate as supplies could not always get through. Hundreds of sick and wounded men were arriving from the front. The few clothes they had were infested with lice and had to be burned, and they had often been fighting in bare feet. “You probably wonder where the things go to,” wrote Madge, “but you cannot take the shirt, pants and vests off them when they are discharged.”

She told the committee in Manchester that the last group had arrived with next to nothing, and would have to be discharged “practically nude” as there were no more clothes to give them. Her patients were dying from lack of food and there was only one syringe in the hospital which she “guarded with her life”. Her requests were simple: “...please ask Manchester to do its utmost to send

money so that you can buy stuff necessary. Don’t send anything for me, devote every penny to the hospital.”

Madge Addy was the last British nurse to leave Spain. She stayed on at the hospital for as long as she could, not returning to England till June 1939 after the Spanish Medical Aid Committee had intervened with the British Foreign Office to secure her a visa.

What happened after that did not come to light until recently. Madge married the Norwegian she had written about from Spain, Wilhelm Holst, and was with him in Paris carrying out relief work when the Germans broke through in 1940.

After moving to Marseilles, she met Thorkild Hansen, a Danish national who served in Special Operations Executive’s “DF” escape section. Madge was soon involved in secret operations and went on to play a vital role in setting up the famous “Garrow-Pat O’Leary” escape line, working with MI9.

She was awarded the OBE for her work in France. Her bravery included travelling as a Norwegian subject on German civil flights, carrying secret messages sewn into the lining of her fur coat, “cool as a cucumber”.

As an English woman operating in enemy-occupied territory, she would have known what the penalty would be if caught.

After the war, she married Hansen and her bravery was recognised in letters of thanks from the British and Dutch authorities for her assistance with Allied escape lines.

Madge Addy died in 1970 before I had the chance to interview her, but, in the course of my research, I was lucky enough to get to know some of the other women who had worked as nurses in Spain. Their fascinating experiences not only led me to write several books on the history of their work in the civil war but also inspired me to write a novel, “Warm Earth”, to reveal the true extent of the fortitude and passion that had filled their lives.

Angela Jackson’s Spanish Civil War novel, “Warm Earth”, is available on Kindle from Amazon.

included, were withdrawn from Spain.

Bessie Berry was among those who went on campaigning for Aid Spain, and it was at one such meeting that she met the former commander of the British Battalion in the International Brigades, Sam Wild.

A newspaper article featured their “love at first sight” romance and his proposal of marriage after only 10 days. Like many other women who had rallied to help the Republic, Bessie continued campaigning for “causes” for the rest of her life.

Right: Bessie Berry (far right) and Sam Wild (left) on their wedding day – and the newspaper report of their romance.



Burgos names its victims of Franco

By Nancy Wallach

I was privileged to be invited to speak at the tribute to the victims of the Francoist repression, which took place in Burgos on 17 April. It was organised by Spain's Association of the Families of the Disappeared and Assassinated and called "In the Footsteps of Memory".

It was an intense and powerful series of events, which included an exhumation at a mass grave and the debut of an exhibit which restored the individual identities and honoured the legacies of those whose bodies were recovered.

I spoke about my father Hy Wallach's experiences at San Pedro de Cardeña, where he had spent 17 months in the International Brigade prison. The memory of the Brigades was still very much present for the multigenerational Burgos audience, who were effusive with thanks for their expression of international solidarity.

It was inspiring to see the capacity crowd of close to 700 people filling the Teatro de Burgos. As many who testified at the theatre related, Burgos bore much of the brunt of the repression during the Franco dictatorship.

The authorities still present obstacles to those who wish to commemorate the prisoners who



Composer Antonio José and one of the exhibition's three boxes of stones (right) bearing the names of the disappeared and executed.



died at San Pedro from disease, malnutrition or execution.

Indeed I was only able to obtain permission to visit the well hidden cemetery at the last minute, because I was the daughter of a former prisoner.

I laid a wreath in the colours of the Second Republic, and one tied with ribbons of the Irish Republic was laid by Manus O'Riordan, who accompanied me, in tribute to the Irish prisoners.

The exhibition in the Burgos Cultural Centre, which included contemporary artwork by local artist Susana Rioseras and documented biographies of the executed, was viewed by many of the family members.

A chilling panel included copies of the official documents granting freedom to prisoners, who

were then re-arrested upon their release, tortured and executed.

Another panel was devoted to the short life of composer Antonio José, executed by a fascist firing squad in 1936. The great loss of this artist's talent can be grasped by Maurice Ravel's prediction that he would become "the great Spanish artist of our century", which due to his murder could not be realised.

The artistry of Antonio José lived on at the Teatro de Burgos on the Sunday night, as contemporary flamenco dancers beautifully interpreted his folk-inspired compositions.

Nancy Wallach is an ALBA (Abraham Lincoln Brigade Archives) board member.

Frank Ryan stayed steadfast under interrogation

By Manus O'Riordan

Having had such a close friendship since the 1980s with Dublin *Brigadistas* Maurice Levitas and Bob Doyle, it had long been my wish to visit the concentration camp of San Pedro de Cardeña, where both had been imprisoned – along with Connolly Column leader Frank Ryan – following their capture by fascist troops on 31 March 1938. The opportunity came during a commemoration of the victims of Francoism, held in Burgos in April. One of the organisers, local anti-fascist activist and historian Nacho García arranged a visit.

Nacho spoke of his researches among the Francoist military archives held at Ferrol, Galicia, into the questionnaires that had to be completed in respect of each International Brigade prisoner on arrival at the San Pedro camp.

The norm was for the prisoners' responses to be given verbally, and subsequently translated and typed

up by the interrogator. These documents would appear to have been accurate accounts of the prisoners' responses, including their defiant adherence to the cause of the Spanish Republic.

But there was no guarantee that this would be the case, or that inaccurate statements would not be falsely attributed to the prisoners. One statement particularly leapt out at Nacho during the course of his researches. Frank Ryan had refused to comply with that indirect procedure and insisted on giving his own handwritten response to each of the questions, the only document he was prepared to sign. Nacho kindly allowed me to copy down the text of this statement signed by Ryan on 4 April 1938, steadfastly adhering to the courage of his convictions, and it is reproduced hereunder.

Nationality and work: Frank Ryan. Irish nationality. Born in Limerick. Residing in Dublin since 1924. 35 years of age. BA of the National University of Ireland. Formerly a teacher. Since 1927 journalist. Editor

of various Republican papers, including "The Republic". Catholic. Participated in the Irish War of Independence 1919-21 and in the Irish Civil War of 1922-23, in the Irish Republican Army in which held the rank of Commandant (= Major).

Political history and ideas: Belonged to the "Sinn Féin" (Republican) party of which Mr de Valera was

President. Subsequently belonged to the Irish Republican Congress – a left-wing Republican Party which aims at the unifying of Ireland and at complete independence from England. I am still a member of this party, and one of its leaders.

Why did you come to Spain? Two reasons. (1) In October 1936, ex-General O'Duffy, who had been dismissed by the Irish Free State Government, led a party of Irishmen to Spain "to fight for the Catholic faith" with General Franco. Believing that religion was not at stake in the Spanish war, and in order to show that O'Duffy did not represent the Irish people, I came to Spain. (2) I also came because I believed that General Franco was getting aid from Germany & Italy, while the other side was denied aid by the "Non-Intervention Pact". My sympathies were with the Madrid government, which I regarded as a democratic government.

And what do you think now? My views are still the same.



Portrait of Frank Ryan by a Basque fellow prisoner at San Pedro de Cardeña.

Manus O'Riordan is the IBMT Ireland Secretary.

The enemy within: how a treacherous coup cleared the way for Franco's final victory

"The Last Days of the Spanish Republic" by Paul Preston (London: William Collins, 2016) £25 (hardback) or £13.99 (ebook)



Reviewed by Tom Sibley

This outstanding book records and analyses a period of the Spanish Civil War often neglected by historians and commentators. Preston's narrative centres on three of the Republic's main actors in

the early months of 1939: Prime Minister Dr Juan Negrín of the PSOE socialist party, the self-serving anti-communist military leader Colonel Segismundo Casado and the self-regarding PSOE veteran and university professor Julián Besteiro.

On 5 March 1939 Casado, commander of the Republican Army of the Centre, launched a military coup against Negrín's elected government. Supported by prominent socialist politicians and anarchist-led army divisions, these rebel forces, encouraged if not actively supported by Franco, were successful in overcoming the remnants of the Republic's Popular Army that remained loyal to the Republican cause.

In bitter fighting in the streets of Madrid up to 2,000 lost their lives as Casado prepared the

ground for what turned out to be an inglorious surrender to Franco's fascist forces. Only the Madrid communists stood by the Republican government and it was they who suffered the greatest losses in what was a civil war within the civil war. In the first 48 hours of fighting the communists more than held their own, but Casado was able to call on reserve forces led by the anarchist lieutenant-colonel Cipriano Mera. Faced with overwhelmingly superior forces, the communists surrendered on 11 March.

Casado and the deluded Besteiro had convinced themselves that by defeating and imprisoning communist militants they would impress Franco with their support of anti-communism and thereby be able to negotiate peace terms guaranteeing that there would be no recriminations against what remained of the Republican army. Unsurprisingly Franco quickly disabused the coup leaders, insisting that any surrender must be unconditional.

On 29 March Franco's army marched unopposed into Madrid and on 1 April the *generalísimo* declared the war over. Thousands were imprisoned and many more forced to flee. Executions of communist militants were widespread, Casado and his co-conspirators had not only betrayed the Republic, but in a few weeks had rendered worthless the sacrifices of the hundreds of thousands of Spaniards and others who had died in the previous three years.

Preston reminds us that it is important to understand that Casado's coup was only successful because of war-weariness of the Spanish people and the cowardice of the political leaderships of the Western democracies. The Popular Army's headlong retreat, after initial impressive advances, back over the Ebro in the autumn of 1938 was soon followed by a massive offensive into Barcelona and Catalonia by Franco's army, heavily backed by Italian tanks and German bombers. Defeat for the Popular Army was

"But it remained a feasible strategy to hold out and play for time in the hope that the Western powers would be dragged into an anti-Hitler war."

inevitable and by early February 1939 it was forced back into the Central South zone.

At this stage Republican forces still commanded a third of Spanish territory and had over 500,000 men under arms. But for the first time war-weariness had become a decisive factor and many of the Republic's military top brass began to press on Negrín the need to sue for peace.

All these factors were exacerbated by the international situation. In late September 1938 the Munich Agreement ("peace in our time") was signed, giving British and French approval to Hitler's annexation of Czech Sudetenland. In effect this was a green light to Hitler's long-standing war plans to turn east and attack Poland and the Soviet Union.

Over the preceding 18 months Negrín, supported by the Soviet Union, had worked tirelessly and secretly on the diplomatic front in an attempt to build an alliance of Western democracies in order to press a mediated peace settlement on Franco, one that would guarantee there would be no reprisals in post-civil war Spain. Munich ended this possibility, slim as it always had been.

But it remained a feasible strategy to hold out and play for time in the hope that the Western powers would be dragged into an anti-Hitler war. Again this was a slim possibility, but Negrín knew that the alternative was horrendous reprisals on a massive scale. He was proved right. The Second World War broke out five months later.

Preston shows how anarchist leaders, both politically and militarily, played a leading role in Casado's junta. He also provides strong evidence

Continued on page 23



CARTOONS: With the active support and encouragement of historian Paul Preston, Spanish cartoonist José Pablo García has completed what

he says is his most ambitious project to date: a comic-book version of Preston's classic work, "A Concise History of the Spanish Civil War".

The 256-page book was published this summer by Debate under the title "La Guerra Civil Española" (21.90 euros or 9.99 euros for an ebook).

Málaga-based García says he hopes the book – so far only in Spanish – will find a new audience among younger people who might otherwise not know much about this key episode in modern Spanish history.

Preston and García collaborated in the project, with Preston suggesting occasional amendments to the illustrations and captions.

García is regarded as one of Spain's top cartoonists and had a best-seller in 2015 with his comic-book novel "Las aventuras de Joselito".



By John Manson

David Mackenzie (pictured right) (1916-?) was the only Scottish writer who went to Spain, although he wasn't known as a writer at the time – unlike the English writers John Cornford, Christopher Caudwell and Ralph Fox, who were killed in Spain.

When the war commenced Mackenzie was secretary of the Peace Council of Edinburgh University, where he was a medical student. Aged 20, he went to the defence of Madrid before the International Brigades were formed in October 1936 and returned early in 1937 after being reported killed.

He lived in several places in Dumfries and Galloway before and after the Second World War, in which he was a volunteer: on a croft, at Kilquhanity School and at the Bridge of Urr.

In later life Mackenzie published "Farmer in the Western Isles" (1954) and "Goat Husbandry" (1957), both with Faber. The second edition of "Goat Husbandry" has a preface, which was signed by the author at "Bridge of Urr, Kirkudbrightshire, 30th November 1965".

Sydney Goodsir Smith (1915-75) tried to join the International Brigade. In an autobiographical letter to Maurice Lindsay he wrote: "I tried to get the Communists to get me across from Paris but they were most strict and when the doctor discovered I had asthma wouldn't look at me..."¹

He wrote a poem in mourning for Federico García Lorca, who was murdered by the Fascists in 1936.

*In Granada, in Granada
They dumbed the mou o a makar,
In Granada, in Granada,
They strak down García Lorca.*²

Sorley MacLean (1911-96) is quoted in the first published discussion of his life and work: "I was in Skye [in 1936], when Jack Stuart and I were going away to the Spanish Civil War together... and I couldn't do that, for pure family economic reasons. He would have gone if I had."³

"The Choice" shows his anguish at not being able to go to Spain. When he hears that a woman friend is going to marry someone else, he writes:

*I did not take a cross's death
in the hard extremity of Spain
and how then should I expect
the one new prize of fate?*⁴

Hugh MacDiarmid (1892-1978) wrote: "I would have given anything I had to give to have been a member of the International Brigade in Spain, but my domestic responsibilities, my physical condition (incompletely recovered from my very serious illness in 1936) made this impossible."⁵ In 1939 he wrote a long poem about Spain, "The Battle Continues", which remained unpublished in full until 1957.

However, several passages from the poem were included in a "living newspaper" devised



Six Scottish writers and the anti-fascist war in Spain

by Ewan MacColl and Joan Littlewood for the Theatre Union, Manchester, in 1940.

*Ah, Spain, already your tragic landscapes
And the agony of your War to my mind appear
As tears may come into the eyes of a woman
very slowly,
So slowly as to leave them CLEAR!*⁶

James Barke (1905-58) wrote a pipe march, "Scottish Ambulance Unit in Spain". Hugh

National Galleries Scotland



ABOVE: "Poets Pub" by Alexander Moffat, with falling militiaman in the background.

TOP: David Mackenzie – a farmer in the Western Isles.

MacDiarmid refers to it in his poem "Goodbye Twilight". The closing chapters of Barke's greatest novel, "The Land of the Leal", deal with his character Andrew Ramsay's decision to join the International Brigade; and he is killed in Spain. "The Land of the Leal" is in Canongate Classics with an introduction by John Burns.

Ian MacPherson (1905-44) published four novels. However, a recent critical biography by Douglas F Young gives an account of an unpublished novel, "Rebels in Homespun", in which Dr Young writes: "The setting... is... at the time of the Spanish Civil War, which reflects MacPherson's preoccupation with the way the war, or the imminence of war, can impinge upon individual aspirations."⁷

One of the "rebels", Peter Mitchell, joins the Republican airforce, where he is killed in action. MacPherson himself was probably a Liberal.

● In his (now iconic) painting "Poets Pub" (1980), which shows Goodsir Smith, MacLean, MacDiarmid, Norman MacCaig, Robert Garioch, Ian Crichton Smith, George Mackay Brown and Edwin Morgan, the artist **Alexander Moffat** includes an impression of the famous Robert Capa photograph of the Spanish militiaman falling backwards.

¹ *Saltire Self Portraits 3*, The Saltire Society, Edinburgh, 1988, p9. ² *Scottish Art and Letters 5*, MacLellan, Glasgow, 1950, p39. ³ *Scottish International 10*, Edinburgh, 1970, p11. ⁴ "Spring Tide and Neap Tide: Selected Poems 1932-1972", Canongate, Edinburgh, 1977, p26. ⁵ National Library of Scotland, MS27037, f50. ⁶ "Hugh MacDiarmid: Complete Poems" II, Martin Brian & O'Keefe, London, 1978, p979. ⁷ Douglas F Young, "Highland Search", Librario, Kinloss, 2002, p145. Quotations by permission of the National Library of Scotland and the MacDiarmid Estate.

John Manson is a retired schoolteacher, independent scholar and IBMT member.

The enemy within

From page 21

that the CNT, the anarchist trade union federation, was infected by fifth columnists and agents provocateurs encouraging adventurous actions while spreading malevolent disinformation and pessimistic thinking. Furthermore, he debunks some rose-tinted views of the anarchist collectivisation initiatives, of which he says: "...exhilarating to participants and... George Orwell, the great collectivist experiments were an obstacle to the creation of a war machine".

Linking Franco's revolt in 1936 and Casado's insurrection in 1939, Preston notes that both renegades justified their treachery as being necessary to rescue the country from an imminent communist take-over.

In both cases this was a travesty of the truth. Anti-communism also bedevilled efforts to unite the anti-fascist movement, particularly at times of crisis such as the lead-up to the May 1937 events in Barcelona. And it was anti-communism and the fear of spreading Soviet influence that was often used as a pretext by the British ruling class to justify its appeasement of Hitler.

Tom Sibley is a retired trade union official, author and IBMT member.

From hope to misery and dark humour

"iNo Pasarán!: Writings from the Spanish Civil War" edited by Pete Ayrton (London: Serpent's Tail, 2016) £20 (hardback)



Reviewed by Paul Simon

Selected and introduced by Serpent's Tail's founder Pete Ayrton, "iNo Pasarán!" offers something outside of the ordinary.

Ayrton—rightly—considers that the English public's understanding

of the Spanish Civil War is too tightly constrained by that of a handful of Anglo-Saxon commentators. Without eschewing contributions from George Orwell, Ernest Hemingway and Esmond Romilly, he and his collective of translators express the previously half-hidden or totally ignored voices of writers from Spain and other countries in this collection of memoirs and fictionalised accounts.

The book also extends its reach across gender, genres and time, bringing together male and female viewpoints, first-hand accounts, fictional representations and contemporary considerations of the impact of the war on Spanish society.

In his enthusiasm to provide a comprehensive witness to the conflict and its lasting impact on individuals and societies, Ayrton controversially chooses to give space to testimonies raised in opposition to the democratically elected Republican government. They add to the value and completeness of the book.

What is revealed are accounts that expose the hope, muddle, misery and dark humour thrown up by the battles of ideas and ideologies between Franco and his backers and the broad coalition of communists, socialists, anarchists and others who set out—with varying degrees of zeal and competence—to defend the Spanish Republic.

Because of the sheer scale of contributions on offer, I'd advise the reader to take the Dadaist approach and pick them out at random.

This not only provides an opportunity to further appreciate the writings of "big" names such as Luis Buñuel and Arthur Koestler but also an exposure to the extraordinary writings of

Continued overleaf

IBMT merchandise

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



15th International Brigade t-shirt

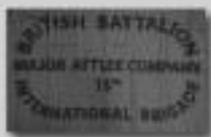
In the autumn of 1937 each of the International Brigades was presented with a flag at the Calderón Theatre in Madrid in a ceremony to celebrate the first anniversary of the formation of the International Brigades. This is a depiction of the flag of the mainly English-speaking 15th International Brigade, 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

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Highly decorative commemorative plate made by Heraldic Pottery in Staffordshire exclusively for the IBMT. Fine bone china,

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iNo Pasarán! bag

Ethically sourced jute bag (30cms square, 150cms 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



Clenched fist sculpture

Life-sized sculpture in specially treated concrete. Based on the clenched fist created by sculptor Betty Rze at the top of the pole for the original British Battalion banner. 290ms high. The clenched fist was the iconic salute of the Popular Front and is still used by anti-fascists around the world. £19.99 plus £7.99 p&p

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

From hope to misery

From previous page

Pere Calders, John Dos Passos, Curzio Malaparte, Dulce Chacón and Arturo Barea.

Buñuel exposes the strategic naivety of the anarchists, who would rather settle scores with the communists than actually fight the fascists, and the murderous intolerance of the Trotskyist POUM, which tellingly calls into question film-maker Ken Loach's romantic opinion of them.

Koestler sweatily recalls an up-close-and-personal encounter with an unhinged Francoist general as well as the suspicious attentions of German Nazi officers, including the son of playwright August Strindberg.

Calders recounts the stifling and sinister battles in the Teruel mines, Dos Passos demonstrates the impact of the war on Spain's villages and Malaparte describes the fate of 15 Spanish fighters in the Red Army.

Chacón imagines the brutality of life in a fascist women's prison, while Barea brings the act of fascist cover-ups to the forefront as

“Buñuel becomes ambivalent, Koestler an anti-communist and POUM-supporter Dos Passos eventually backs the arch-conservatives Barry Goldwater and Richard Nixon.”

the body of a murdered Republican is exhumed decades after his death.

With every page the reader learns and appreciates more, with deeper insight than previously, about the true nature of the war.

In a helpful gesture to the reader, there is a short biographical footnote after each article to explain the trajectory of the writer. In most cases, that journey is rightwards. Buñuel becomes ambivalent, Koestler an anti-communist and POUM-supporter Dos Passos eventually backs the arch-conservatives Barry Goldwater and Richard Nixon.

Yet there is hope too. Malaparte went onto regret his flirtation with fascism and joined the Italian Communist Party, and more recent writers have shown their contempt for the post-Franco settlement of forgetting, by exposing fascist war crimes and peacetime oppression to public scrutiny. Highly recommended.

Paul Simon is a Suffolk-based journalist. This review first appeared in the *Morning Star* on 9 May 2016.

Aileen Palmer's troubled life as activist and wordsmith

“Ink in her Veins: The Troubled Life of Aileen Palmer” by Sylvia Martin (Crawley, Western Australia: UWA Publishing, 2016), £19.99



Reviewed by Pauline Fraser

“Spain stands out in my own life like a beacon light, as the time when we stood for ‘the cause of all progressive mankind’,” wrote Aileen Palmer in words that echo the feelings of many of the

volunteers. The poetry she wrote, informed by her experiences in Spain, is some of her best. But Sylvia Martin's biography is much more than a re-telling of Aileen's time in Spain.

This is a work of enormous scholarship and Martin has trawled tirelessly through the records of the four members of the Palmer family: Australian writers Vince and Nettie Palmer, and daughters Aileen and Helen.

Aileen was born in London in 1915 into a family dominated by words. Of her mother, Aileen was to write: “She has always had a passion for verbalising everything. It is almost as though nothing exists for her until it has been put into words.” Nettie had forsaken poetry when Aileen arrived, proclaiming that she didn't want “ink to run in her veins”.

The tension between a quiet, reflective life spent writing and a life of action was to pull Aileen in different directions. She had a lot to live up to in her parents: Vance, novelist and playwright, sometimes reduced to writing journalistic “pot-boilers”, and Nettie who, most often, worked as a jobbing journalist to put bread on the table, sacrificing her career as a serious writer for Vance's.

Aileen and her younger sister Helen led a semi-nomadic existence as their parents were invariably hard-up but in quest of tranquil places to live and write. Aileen found the constant moves unsettling and said she wanted to live in a “firm house”, although the Palmers picked some idyllic spots where the girls could freely roam the bush.

The book is divided into three parts. Part 1, “A Promising Life”, gives a fascinating insight into the world of Australian literature in the first half of the 20th century and the preoccupations of the left. In 1917, for example, a referendum was held on the question of conscription. Aileen's parents and their friends were active in the anti-conscription movement, and as a two-year-old she learnt an anti-conscription song.

After completing university, Aileen accompanied her parents to Europe. She later wrote that her mother had told someone: “We want the children to see something of Europe before it's

blown up”, which she thought was a frivolous way of putting it, “since I've seen a bit of what blowing-up can be like.”

She intended to offer her services as a translator during the People's Olympiad in July 1936, but when the people of Barcelona rose up to defend their city, Nettie and Vance insisted that all three leave Spain. Aileen, however, resolved “to get out from under the shadow of her parents”, as Sylvia Martin puts it, and returned to Spain to work as a translator with the British Medical Unit.

In Part II, “A Decade of War”, we learn of the exemplary contribution Aileen made to the administration of the medical services of the British Battalion. Dr Sinclair-Loutit, who headed up the first hospital at Grañén, said she was “terrific, a quiet, indefatigable worker”. She later became Dr Len Crome's indispensable secretary, working in battlefield hospitals at Brunete and Teruel.

Aileen wanted to be where the need was greatest. Offered a desk job in Barcelona, she 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. She was immersed in a life of action, but there was still time for her romantic attachments, apparently to other women. Aileen was reticent about these details, as lesbianism was then regarded as a psychological deviation

Called back to Australia after the war to tend her sick mother, she found it difficult to fit into the comfortable life there. Mental health problems were to dog her for the rest of her life. In her good times she remained a committed activist and wrote poetry to protest against the horrors of nuclear weapons. She later campaigned against the Vietnam War and undertook the translation of the poetry of the Vietnamese poet To Huu and the prison diary of Ho Chi-Minh.

Too often, however, she was subjected to the “shock” treatments in use by psychiatry at the time. She wrote to her doctor to implore him not to give her any more ECT (electroconvulsive therapy) because of her “fear of losing my effective self”.

When Aileen died in 1988 there were no tributes or obituaries, but in 1993, a memorial to the Australians who had served in the Spanish Civil War was unveiled at Lotus Bay on Lake Burley Griffin, Canberra, where Aileen Palmer's poem “Danger is never danger” was read out.

Another of her poems, “The dead have no regrets”, was read by Maxine Peake at this year's IBMT commemoration next to the International Brigade memorial in Jubilee Gardens, London.

Pauline Fraser is an IBMT Trustee.

How the lost recordings of Ernst Busch were rescued

RIEN DIJKSTRA, Secretary of Stichting Spanje 1936-1939, the International Brigades memorial association in the Netherlands, writes...

In June I was at a symposium about the Spanish Civil War at the Cegosoma Institute in Brussels. At the start of the programme they were playing some songs of the famous German International Brigader and singer Ernst Busch – and I instantly knew that this was something special.

The songs were from a recording of a performance by Ernst Busch (1900-1980) and a choir of International Brigaders in 1939/40, which goes with an astonishing story.

In 1938, Ernst Busch left Spain, and he moved to Antwerp, the city to which he had pledged his heart. There he stayed with Yvonne de Man, sister of the prominent Belgian social democrat Hendrik de Man.

In Antwerp Busch had several occupations. One of them was leading a choir, which partly



REDISCOVERED: After the Second World War, Ernst Busch founded the state-owned VEB Deutsche Schallplatten music publishing company in East Germany. Among the releases on its Aurora label was “Canciones de las Brigadas Internacionales” (1968), which included some of the recordings he made at the Polydor studio in Paris in January 1940. Now, some of these previously “lost” recordings are to be restored.

consisted of International Brigaders and Jewish workers. Together with the choir he took off to Paris late in 1939 to record a number of songs at the Polydor studio. Shortly after the completion of these recordings the Germans invaded the Netherlands, Belgium and France. And Ernst Busch, back in Antwerp, was arrested.

The recordings were never collected from the studio in Paris, and Polydor finally sent them to the ordering customer: the firm Lied der Zeit, with an address at Mercatorstraat 42 in Antwerp.

However, this company did not exist. The actual occupant of this property was diamond merchant Maurice Kleinhaus, the man who had financed the recordings in Paris. Kleinhaus was an immigrant from Berlin, where he had been acquainted with people like Rosa Luxemburg, Kautsky and Tucholsky and was a friend of Karl Liebknecht and his family. Later he would include Vera Liebknecht, the daughter of Karl Liebknecht, in his family. Also,

Ernst Busch would stay intermittently at the Kleinhaus family house in the 1930s.

The boxes with the recordings were stored in a Belgian customs depot, as it was too dangerous to retrieve them. So a friend of the Kleinhaus family secretly approached some custom officers and asked them to hide the boxes. It was only after the war that Kleinhaus's daughter, Antoinette Kleinhaus, collected them from customs.

With great difficulty and with the help of the Russian embassy she managed to send two of the three boxes to Ernst Busch, who already was in East Germany.

Maurice Kleinhaus, however, did not survive the war, German border guards on the French-Swiss border having murdered him. In the 1980s Antoinette gave the remaining recordings to the Belgian Institute Amsab-ISH in Gent.

These recordings have been partly digitised and the institute plans to professionally digitise them all in 2017.

Drama revival that is less than flattering to Hemingway

IBMT member CAROLE WODDIS reviews “The Fifth Column”, Ernest Hemingway’s rarely seen play about the Spanish Civil War, which was at the Southwark Playhouse, London, from 24 March to 16 April.

Over the past dozen years or so, Tricia Thorns and Two’s Company have unearthed some terrific forgotten plays, notably about the First World War and the role of women in society. Alas, the London premiere, almost 80 years on, of Ernest Hemingway’s only play, “The Fifth Column”, is unlikely to be marked amongst them, though Thorns typically marshals her forces at Southwark Playhouse with flair and attention to detail.

If “The Fifth Column” fails to exert the same kind of grip on theatre audiences as readers of Hemingway’s associative Spanish Civil War novel, “For Whom the Bell Tolls”, the fault lies in a play that harbours too much personal colour at the expense of focus.

Based on its author’s own experiences in 1937 in Madrid during the bombardment by Nationalist rebels – and their “fifth column” sympathisers in



GRIPPING: Philip Rawlings (Simon Darwen) and Dorothy Bridges (Alix Dunmore) – thinly disguised versions of Ernest Hemingway and Martha Gellhorn.

Madrid – against the Republicans, it often feels like a thinly disguised autobiography of Hemingway himself with its central action centred on an American war correspondent (as was Hemingway at the time), dallying in schizoid fashion with a female war correspondent (any relation here between Hemingway’s unlikely shallow blonde, Dorothy Bridges, and his real life “amour”, Martha Gellhorn, is purely accidental).

Passing himself off as a useless alcoholic play-

boy but clandestinely fighting for the Republicans, Hemingway’s Philip Rawlings is stereotypically macho and hard-drinking, with a laconic cynicism hiding his true idealism beneath the garrulous womaniser.

It’s a mighty, thankless and wordy task for Simon Darwen, a Thorns regular, who manages to endow Rawlings with dynamic charm whilst also laying bare the character’s sexual and emotional selfishness.

Maybe that is Hemingway’s real achievement – to show the muck and egotism amongst the heroism. For in amongst the scurry of scenes in hotel bedrooms, bars, interrogation cells and city batteries, there’s precious little sense of the era’s political reality.

Paradoxically, the two most convincing characters are peripheral – Michael Edwards’s German International Brigader Max and Sasha Frost’s Anita, a former Rawlings girlfriend, described unflatteringly as “a Moorish Tart”!

In short, whilst “The Fifth Column” is no doubt true to the spirit of those disorganised, cruel and chaotic times, it’s less than flattering to its author as playwright.



Spanish militiamen sketched by Felicia Browne and (right) Sonia Boué at work on the “Through an Artist’s Eye” project.

Felicia Browne: a tribute in art and poetry

Eighty years ago in August 1936 the artist Felicia Browne was killed near Tardienta, in Aragon, thus becoming the first Briton to be killed in action in the Spanish Civil War. Her life and work are being celebrated this autumn in a series of events organised by artist Sonia Boué and writer Jenny Rivarola.

“Through an Artist’s Eye” is an artistic and poetic response to the life and work of British artist Felicia Browne, who volunteered to fight in the Spanish Civil War in the summer of 1936. She lost her life on her first mission, aged 32.

Supported by the Arts Council and Surrey County Council, this new project is being launched in London on 30 September, followed by events in Kingston upon Thames and Esher.

Visual artist Sonia Boué and writer Jenny Rivarola are both daughters of Spanish Civil War exiles to Britain. Together they have created a series of paintings and poems that mark key stages in Felicia’s life and her fateful journey to Spain and her final experience in August 1936.

These will be exhibited alongside a number of Felicia’s works and excerpts from her letters held in the Felicia Browne archive at Tate Britain.

Born in Thames Ditton in 1904 into a large and well-heeled family, Felicia attended the Slade School of Fine Art. She later studied sculpture in Berlin, where the rise of Nazism led her to join the Communist Party in the early 1930s.

More comfortable in the company of working people, Felicia became a fervent campaigner for women’s rights in the workplace and strongly encouraged trade union membership.

Already widely travelled in Europe, she set off with a photo-journalist friend, Edith Bone, on a car journey via Paris to Spain in 1936. It is believed they planned to attend the People’s Olympiad in Barcelona – due to be staged as a counterpoint to the official Olympic Games in Hitler’s Berlin.

Their arrival in Barcelona in mid-July 1936 coincided with the bitter street fighting that marked the start of the Spanish Civil War. Felicia managed to enrol in the Republican militia, saying she could “fight as well as any man”.

After just a few days, she was killed on a mission to blow up a fascist munitions train. The crossfire was so intense that her body had to be abandoned where it lay. She was the first British casualty in the war, and its only female fighter.

Felicia left a large number of highly-accomplished drawings, which reflect not only her brief

period in war-torn Spain but also her strong political principles.

They depict the working people she so admired, both peasants working in the fields and women scrubbing and washing. The bulls and images of the militia tell us that her sketchbook was never far away, even during those fraught weeks in Spain.

She also left a series of poignant letters that reveal her often turbulent state of mind before and during the journey to Spain. They illustrate her toughness and extraordinary humour in the face of adversity.

“Through an Artist’s Eye” will have its launch on 30 September at 6.30pm at the Marx Memorial Library, 37a Clerkenwell Green, London EC1R 0DU [www.marx-library.org]. On 6 October at 6.30pm at All Saints Church, Market Place, Kingston upon Thames KT1 1JP there will be an introduction to the life of Felicia Browne by Professor Tom Buchanan and a poetry reading by Jenny Rivarola. On 21 October a free art workshop inspired by Felicia Browne will be led by Sonia Boué from 11:30am-3pm at All Saints Church Hall (Weston Green), Chestnut Ave, Esher KT10 8JL. To book a place contact [soniaboué@yahoo.co.uk].

See the “Through an Artist’s Eye” blog: [https://artistseye.com.wordpress.com].

The new IBMT online newsletter replaces our ‘What’s on’ listings

The *IBMT Newsletter* will no longer have a “What’s on” page, with listings of forthcoming events.

Instead, we are launching from September a new fortnightly *IBMT eNewsletter*, which will carry listings as well as topical news and other information.

The new newsletter will be emailed to all members for whom we have an email address.

If you do not receive the *IBMT eNewsletter*, this means that we do not have your current email address. To be put on the emailing list, send us your email

address to: [admin@international-brigades.org.uk].

We believe this will be a much-improved service that will let members know what is happening in their area, nationally and internationally.

In the *IBMT Newsletter*, much of the information about forthcoming events soon became out-of-date. An online service, on the other hand, can alert members to up-to-date information in a flash.

It’s clear from the number of email addresses we have that most IBMT members have access to the internet.

But we recognise that some do not. So, if you wish to receive a printed copy of the *IBMT eNewsletter*, send us a stamped addressed envelope and we will post it to you.

If you plan to do this, it makes sense to send us several such envelopes so that you do not have to keep sending them to us every two weeks. Post them to: IBMT eNewsletter, 37a Clerkenwell Green, London EC1R 0DU.

Finally, remember to let us know of any International Brigade-related event in your area or that you are involved in, so that we can let others know about it.



REMEMBERING THE INTERNATIONAL BRIGADES

A two-week festival hosted by the Marx Memorial Library to commemorate the formation of the International Brigades 80 years ago

17–30 October 2016

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- ▶ An evening of poetry, music and film
- ▶ Agitprop theatre workshop for school students
- ▶ Speakers on the labour movement and the International Brigades
- ▶ Matinée performance at the Marx Memorial Library of extracts from *Dare Devil Rides to Jarama*
- ▶ Unveiling of the restored Battle of the Ebro plaque listing British Battalion dead
- ▶ Launch of online International Brigade photo library on Marx Memorial Library website



Venues

Marx Memorial Library 37a Clerkenwell Green, London EC1R 0DU

Bussey Building 133 Rye Lane, London SE15 4ST

More information

www.marx-memorial-library.org/education/upcoming-events

Booking for *Dare Devil Rides to Jarama*

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