



IBMT Magazine

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INTERNATIONAL BRIGADE MEMORIAL TRUST

How British were the

'British' volunteers?





BANNERS FOR SPAIN

An exhibition showcasing six newly conserved Aid Spain banners plus other artefacts from the Marx Memorial Library and Islington archives

5 May to 8 July 2017 at Islington Museum, 245 St John Street, London EC1V 4NB
Monday – Saturday (closed Wednesday) 10am-5pm; free admission

Events are free and at either Islington Museum (address above) or the Marx Memorial Library, 37a Clerkenwell Green, London EC1R 0DU.

FILM: The Guernica Children
27 April, 7pm, Marx Memorial Library

Screening of Stephen Bowles's acclaimed film to mark 80 years since Guernica's aerial destruction by Nazi war planes. Introduced by Herminio Martínez, one of nearly 4,000 Basque child refugees who came to Britain in 1937.

WALK: Islington in the Spanish Civil War

6 May, 3 June & 24 June, 11am, Marx Memorial Library

Explore the lives of Islington people who played a part in the war with a local historical guide.

TALK: Britain and the Spanish Civil War

9 May, 6.30pm, Islington Museum
Professor Tom Buchanan (Oxford University), author of 'The Impact of the Spanish Civil War on Britain'.

WORKSHOP: Islington's banner for Spain

13 May, 10.30am-4pm, Islington Museum

Join banner-maker Ed Hall to help make a banner about Islington's involvement in the Spanish Civil War. The banner will go on display at Islington Museum.

EXPLORE: The Spanish archives
1 June, 6pm, Marx Memorial Library

An opportunity to explore the Marx Memorial Library's unique

Spanish Collection with Archivist & Library Manager Meirian Jump.

TALK: Artists for Spain

8 June, 7pm, Marx Memorial Library

Art historian and critic Christine Lindey on artistic responses to the Spanish Civil War, including references to Laurence Bradshaw (1899-1978) and Julian Otto Trevelyan (1910-1988), the artists credited with the banners on display at Islington Museum.



www.islington.gov.uk/heritage ● 020 7527 2837
www.marx-memorial-library.org ● 020 7253 1485



Cover picture

Oil painting by Thomas Chilvers (extending to our back cover) of the British Anti-Tank Battery in Spain. Born in 1909, Chilvers, from Redcar, was an International Brigader and former merchant seafarer. Signed 'T. Chilvers '85', the painting hangs in the Marx Memorial Library, London, and is reproduced here by permission. The MML would like to make contact with any surviving members of the Chilvers family, who should email [archives@mml.xyz].

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At the IBMT's Len Crome Memorial Conference



The IBMT's annual lecture day on 18 March returned to the Manchester Conference Centre and once again drew a large audience. This year's theme was 'Liberty's Volunteers: the timeless legacy of the Spanish Civil War' and the main speakers (pictured below left, from left) were Madrid-based author and journalist Giles Tremlett and historian and IBMT Chair Richard Baxell.

Tremlett (also pictured above) spoke about the enduring political legacy of Francoism and Spain's struggle to come to terms with its fractured recent history – topics covered in his acclaimed book 'Ghosts of Spain: Travels Through a Country's Hidden Past'. The slide being projected behind him shows right-wing Spanish premier José María Aznar with Tony Blair and



George Bush in the run-up to the invasion of Iraq in 2003.

The day was marked by lively discussions after each talk (below, right) and by the presence of many Manchester-based Spaniards (see bottom picture). David Leach's film 'Voices from a Mountain', about the discovery of a memorial to the dead of the Battle of the Ebro that survived the Franco dictatorship, was also screened and the day concluded with a rousing selection of Spanish Civil War songs from local quartet the Mad Donnas.

The lecture day is named after Len Crome, the Lancashire-born Lancashire GP who went to Spain in 1936 and became head of the International Brigades' medical services.

● See page 5 for Richard Baxell's talk.



Photos: Jim Jump and Marshall Mateer



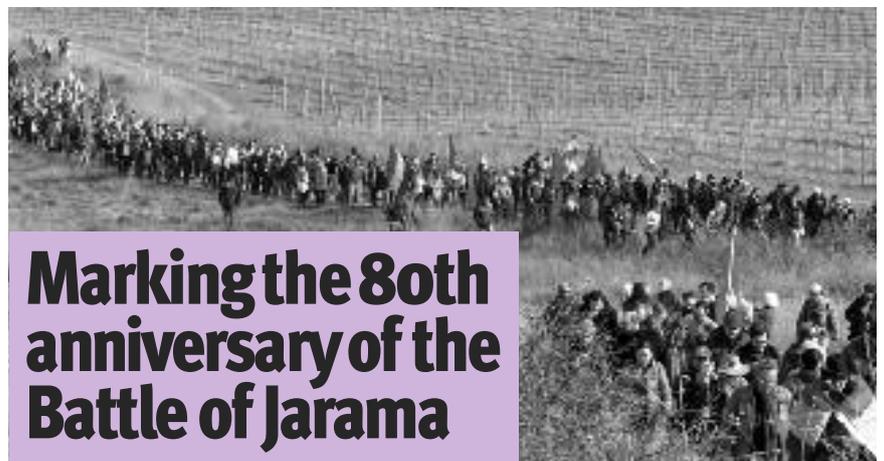


VISITOR: Film director Ken Loach (pictured centre) toured the IBMT's 'Antifascistas' exhibition at the Curzon Cinema & Arts in Clevedon on 21 March. He is seen here holding a copy of the IBMT book 'Antifascistas: British & Irish Volunteers in the Spanish Civil War' that was presented to him by local IBMT activist Duncan Longstaff (left) and Cardiff-based IBMT Membership Secretary Mary Greening (right).

Loach was in Clevedon for a special screening of his latest, award-winning film 'I, Daniel Blake', but took time out to look at the IBMT's exhibition (partially visible in the background) – which he said he found to be interesting.

'Antifascistas' was on display at the cinema as part of an Arts Council-funded 'Road to Freedom' project, including performances and films, to remember the impact of the Spanish Civil War on South-West England and South Wales.

When released in 1995, Ken Loach's 'Land and Freedom', about British volunteers in the revolutionary militias fighting in Aragon early in the Spanish Civil War, was received very critically by most International Brigade veterans. Though regarded as a fine film, it has continued to stir controversy since then, particularly over its negative portrayal of the International Brigades.



Marking the 80th anniversary of the Battle of Jarama

Pictured clockwise from top left:

- IBMT supporters and union activists joined Spanish trade unionists at the memorial in Madrid's Atocha Street to five left-wing lawyers murdered 40 years ago by Spanish neo-fascists trying to sabotage the return of democracy after Franco's death two years earlier in 1975. The 116-strong group from Britain were in the Spanish capital on 10/11 February to mark the 80th anniversary of the Battle of Jarama – in which 150 men of the British Battalion were killed – as part of a trip organised by IBMT members from the North-West of England.

- At a reception by the Spanish CCOO trade union confederation, Tosh McDonald (centre), president of train drivers' union ASLEF, presented Jaime Cedrún, general secretary of the CCOO Madrid region, with a copy of the IBMT book 'A Spanish Civil War Scrapbook'. Also pictured (partially) is Lynn Collins, regional secretary of the North West TUC.

- Many hundreds of International Brigade supporters from around the world wound their way across the Jarama battlefield on 18 February for the Battle of Jarama's 80th anniversary 'memorial march'. This was part of a weekend of commemorative activities on 17/18 February organised by the Madrid-based AABI International Brigades friendship group, in which some 60 IBMT members took part.

- Musicians from Britain, Ireland and Spain – among them Calum Baird, Gallo Rojo and Na-mara – played to an audience of 1,000 at a Battle of Jarama memorial concert on 17 February at the Pilar Bardem Theatre in Rivas Vaciamadrid.

- A ceremony of remembrance was held on 17 February at the memorial in Tarancón listing the 39 Scottish members of the British Battalion who were killed at Jarama (see also page 10).





Were the 'Britons' British?

Internationalism and national identity in the International Brigades

Most of the 2,500 volunteers who went to Spain from Britain and Ireland joined the British Battalion of the mainly English-speaking 15th International Brigade – which also included the Abraham Lincoln Battalion and Mackenzie-Papineau Battalion, made up principally of Americans and Canadians respectively. The British Battalion was the only battalion given a national name. But how 'British' was it? What was its real composition? How did the various national groups in it get on? And how 'internationalist' were the International Brigades as a whole? These were the topics addressed by historian (and IBMT Chair) **RICHARD BAXELL** (pictured above) in his talk at the IBMT's Len Crome Memorial Conference in Manchester on 18 March. Here is an edited version of what he said...



Most historians now agree that around 35,000 people from some 53 nations volunteered to join the Spanish Republican forces. Of those, as many as 2,500 travelled to Spain from the British Isles. A reasonable estimate would suggest that up to 550 of them were from Scotland, between 150-200 from Wales and 70 from Northern Ireland. There were also up to 250 from what was then the Irish Free State, 60 from Cyprus, a similar number from Australia and a handful from Canada, South Africa, New Zealand and several other Commonwealth countries. There were even three volunteers from India and one claiming to come from Iraq, who volunteered under the unlikely name of John Smith (it was, of course, a *nom de guerre* – his real name was actually Gopal Mohan Huddar and he was Indian, rather than Iraqi).

What is not always revealed is that somewhere between 10 and 20 per cent of the volunteers were Jewish. It's hard to be more accurate than that because individuals disguised their Jewish origins by changing or anglicising their names, for understandable reasons.

When it comes to the volunteers' place of origin, as we have seen, nearly 90 per cent gave addresses within England, Scotland or Wales. Therefore, on first sight it does not seem wholly unreasonable for their unit to have been called the British Battalion. However, a large number of those who gave UK addresses when they joined the International Brigades were actually not from Britain. This is particularly so with the approximately 500 who gave London addresses. As with Paris, Britain's capital city hosted – as it does today – a large transient population and a number of volunteers used temporary or 'care of' addresses, such

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ABOVE: The 50-strong British Anti-Tank Battery of the 15th International Brigade also contained volunteers from several other countries, including Canada, Norway, South Africa, Spain and the US.

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Cypriot Centre in Soho, the Communist Party's headquarters in Covent Garden, or the Sailors' Home in Whitechapel. Others gave their address simply as 'London'.

The large migrant population supports the conclusions drawn by Helen Graham in her last study, 'The War and its Shadow', where she argued that

“It's clear that a number of volunteers in the British Battalion – particularly many of the Irish – would not have identified themselves as British.”

many of the volunteers were themselves, or the offspring of, transient 'border-crossers'. This may, on first sight, not seem to fit with the rest of the British volunteers, many of whom had never travelled beyond their home town, let alone across international borders. However, it's clearly true of, for example, the Cypriots living in Soho and also true of the large number of first generation Jews in the East End. And it's also true of many Irish volunteers, some of whom were living and working in Britain, others who had emigrated to the US or Canada. While many of these fought with the American Lincolns or the Canadian Mac-Paps, some certainly fought with the British Battalion.

So it's clear that a number of volunteers in the British Battalion – particularly many of the Irish – would not have identified themselves as British. But does this matter? After all, most international units included volunteers from several nations. In itself, perhaps not. However, as we shall see, lazily portraying all the volunteers in the battalion as 'British' was something that happened at the time and was to have dramatic consequences.

When the first English-speaking volunteers began to trickle into Spain in the late summer of 1936, they were placed within larger national units, such as the French 11th International Brigade, or the German 12th. As increasing numbers of volunteers arrived, there were soon enough to form an English-speaking company, which was placed within the La Marseillaise Battalion of the French 14th International Brigade. This unit formed the core of the British 16th Battalion, when it was formed at Christmas 1936. Alongside the British Battalion in the 15th International Brigade would be one from the US, another from Canada and a battalion of Franco-Belge, then Yugoslavian

volunteers, placed there in an attempt to bring up the numbers to something resembling brigade strength – though they were still very low in number compared with a conventional army.

Following the practice established in other international units fighting in Spain, each of the battalions took their name from a significant figure or event in the respective nation's history. A French battalion was named after the Paris Commune, the Germans had a Thälmann Battalion and the Yugoslavs were known as the Dimitrovs. The British unit was named after the Indian Communist MP for Battersea, Shapurji Saklatvala, who had died from a heart attack in January 1936.

Whilst undoubtedly an influential figure in the radical politics of south London, Saklatvala's name hardly possessed the cachet of the heads of the Communist International or the German Communist Party, persecuted and imprisoned by the Nazis. So, not surprisingly, the battalion's name never caught on and the unit became universally known as the British Battalion by English-speakers or as *el batallón inglés* by Spaniards.

At the beginning of January 1937, there were roughly 450 at the British Battalion's new base in Madrigueras, a small village just to the north of Albacete¹. Here they began to come to terms with military training and discipline and the shortages and mixed quality of equipment. They also had to face a surprisingly cold and wet climate, unfamiliar food, no beer and deceptively strong wine.

During the period of training evidence first arose of friction between different national groups within the battalion. A number of the Irish volunteers were already uneasy with having been placed in a so-called British unit, not surprising given the recent history between the two countries. Their misgivings turned to alarm and anger when it was discovered that two senior British figures in Spain – the commander of No.1 Company currently serving at Lopera, George Nathan, and the first battalion commander, Wilf Macartney – were rumoured to have played a role in British covert activities in Ireland. Worse still, Nathan was suspected as having been involved in a hit-squad that murdered two prominent members of Sinn Féin in May 1921. Suspicions developed that he might be a Franco spy.

According to one Irish volunteer, Jim Prendergast, Nathan was, in effect, put on trial for his life. He vehemently denied that he was a spy, but admitted that he had indeed been operating as a British intelligence officer in Ireland². However, he claimed that he was acting under orders and argued that, as a Jew, he was now a staunch anti-fascist and that all the volunteers in Spain were on the same side now. According to a number of accounts by Irish volunteers, the meeting responded to the spirit of his speech and actually applauded him. Undoubtedly this was due to the widespread admiration held for the military skills and courage that Nathan had demonstrated during the disastrous Lopera action in December 1936. Eight of the 50 Irish volunteers had been killed and only the actions of Nathan,

AT EASE: The British Battalion before the Battle of the Ebro in 1938. The speaker is battalion commander Sam Wild. Immediately behind him is political commissar Bob Cooney.



who coolly organised a retreat under fire, had prevented further losses.

However, resentment was reignited by a tactless report in the British communist paper, the *Daily Worker*, in early January, which recounted the actions of No.1 Company at Lopera, but made no mention of the Irish, instead describing them all as British volunteers. A number of the Irish at Madrigueras were furious, and it became clear that an attempt needed to be made to resolve the simmering discontent.

A meeting was called on 12 January, attended by approximately 45 Irish members of the battalion. During a stormy session, a number demanded that the group leave the British-dominated unit, while others argued vigorously 'that distinctions must be made between anti-fascist working-class comrades from Britain and British imperialism'³. Despite their efforts, at the end of the meeting the Irish group voted by a ratio of two to one to leave and join the Americans. While this was the most serious outbreak of discord between nationalities, it was by no means the last. As we shall see, arguments extended beyond the British unit, embroiling other national groups within the International Brigades.

Following the Irish departure, the British Battalion, and the 15th International Brigade itself, were thrown firstly into the Battle of Jarama in February 1937 and, five months later, the Republican Brunete offensive. In both, the volunteers suffered appalling casualties. Over 150 were killed at Jarama and of 331 British volunteers in the ranks at the start of Brunete only 42 remained at the end. Of these, many were understandably low in morale, and pointed questions were being asked regarding the discipline and commitment of their Spanish comrades. The British political commissar, Walter Tapsell, was incandescent: 'In plain fact, and it is hard to state this, on every occasion we were with Spanish troops in this engagement they let us down. Their behaviour on every occasion either resulted in serious casualties, or the immediate loss of positions won by us at heavy cost. This is a fact.'⁴

According to another commissar, John Angus, disillusion with their Spanish comrades extended even to Bob Merriman, the commander of the American Lincolns, who remarked bitterly to him that 'the only people who do not run away are the English and the Germans'⁵. The belief that the International Brigades were used as shock-troops and were more dedicated than some of the Spanish forces seems to have been widely held⁶.

On first sight it might appear strange that the Internationals were critical of the very people that they had come to help. However, to many of the Brigaders, the war was not a civil war between Spaniards, but an anti-fascist war. Thus this was just as much their fight, and the fact that it was being fought in Spain was almost immaterial. Spain was just the latest front on the European battlefield.

Unfortunately, what the leadership of the Brigades – Luigi Longo – tactfully characterised as 'differences in language, military experience and customs' also produced frictions between the international volunteers themselves⁷. A report by General Walter (General Karol Świerczewski), the Polish commander of the 35th Division, of which the 15th International Brigade was part, admitted: 'The nationality question is the weakest spot in the international units and is the main hindrance impeding the growth of our potential. Very little is said about relations between the nationalities within the international units, or more truthfully, it is completely hushed up, but it is just this which gives rise to almost all our weaknesses... at the very same time as the volunteers were unifying, this petty, disgusting, foul squabble about the superiority of one nationality over another was going on. Everyone was superior to the French, but even they were superior to the Spanish.'⁸

Some of the German volunteers viewed the French with particular contempt, portraying them as 'drinkers, quarrelsome, and sometimes sloppy'. Meanwhile, a number of Scandinavians, Austrians and German-speaking Czechs, who had been placed in German units, complained that they were being 'oppressed' and unable to gain promotions.

There are also a number of accounts of arguments and rivalry between

the national groups within the 15th International Brigade. Some Americans harboured resentments against particular British individuals, such as Captain George Wattis, who was blamed for the heavy American casualties at Jarama. Meanwhile, many British felt that the American influence in the 15th Brigade was too powerful. Some Canadians felt the same way and made disparaging remarks about the Americans, whom they felt to be rather less hardy than themselves. As one Canadian acidly observed: 'I think most of them would starve to death in a grocery store.'¹⁰

When Bill Alexander, a commander of the British Battalion in Spain, later claimed that 'English, Scots, Welsh and all other nationalities mixed, with

“Some Americans harboured resentments against particular British individuals... Meanwhile, many British felt that the American influence in the 15th Brigade was too powerful.”

some chaffing and jokes' he was therefore giving a typically upbeat analysis. The claim by an anonymous volunteer that 'I found that national pride was one of the chief features in the life of the International Brigade' may have been an exaggeration, but it clearly played a role¹¹.

It is clear that there were occasions when, despite the positive internationalist rhetoric, there was friction between the different national groups. However, it would be wrong to see this as the overarching story of foreign volunteers in the Spanish Civil War. That the International Brigades managed to operate at all, with all that was set against them, was an astonishing feat.

Questions over exactly how many volunteers there were and from where they came are likely to remain. While it might seem that this is an obvious and, perhaps, over-laboured point, the issue does have contemporary relevance and not just to academic historians.

Over recent years a spate of local memorials to the international volunteers have been erected across Britain and Ireland. Part of the process usually involves drawing up lists of volunteers from the respective area, whether it be a village, town or city. Understandably perhaps, there is a tendency to include everyone connected to the area. For example, any memorial to volunteers from Oxford or Cambridge is, not unreasonably, going to include those who had studied at the universities. However, included on the plaque to volunteers from Southwark, Bermondsey and Camberwell are the Liverpoolian trade union leader, Jack Jones, the former soldier from Coatbridge in Scotland, Jock Cunningham, and the Jewish Latvian Dr Len Crome. Not one of these had any connection with south London before they went to Spain.

Does this matter? As a historian it matters to me. And it also matters to many family members of the volunteers and their supporters, a point amply demonstrated by continuing arguments over which national group sent the largest number of volunteers as a proportion of their total population.

At the unveiling of the International Brigade memorial in Ottawa in 2001, Adrienne Clarkson, the Governor General of Canada, asserted that 'except for France, no other country gave a greater proportion of its population as volunteers in Spain than Canada'.

A similar claim was made by Paul Philippou in his study of the Greek and Cypriot volunteers, 'Spanish Thermopylae'¹², which was picked up by the

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son of a Cypriot Brigader in a letter to the *IBMT Newsletter*: 'Some 40 to 60 Cypriots joined the International Brigades [and] 16 of them were killed. In the mid-1930s the population of Cyprus was 350,000 and this makes Cyprus the country with the highest percentage of volunteers in the Spanish Civil War.'¹³

This earned a swift response from Martin Sugarman of the Jewish ex-servicemen's association, who argued that the Cypriot population at the time was actually 371,000, not 350,000. He believed that the British Mandate of Palestine – including the current state of Israel, which did not exist at the time – sent a higher proportion: between 200-300 from a population of 1.38 million. He further argued that – if the Arab population were excluded and only the 386,000 Jews counted – the proportion would be even higher, as only one Palestinian Arab is believed to have gone to Spain'¹⁴.

For those who wish to fly the International Brigade banner at demonstrations – both literally and metaphorically – the involvement of the volunteers in the defence of the democratic Spanish Republic was the 'last great cause' and

“What is needed is a comprehensive universal list of all the volunteers for Spain, where nationality is just one facet, like occupation or political affiliation. This would go a long way towards eliminating double-counting and disputes.

many are understandably sensitive to what they perceive as any attempt to lessen the contribution of the International Brigades.

So, if numbers are important, what can be done to try and ensure that they are accurate? Well, there are now lists available of the men and women from a number of countries who volunteered to serve in Spain. However, as we have seen, many volunteers were migrants and their nationality was sometimes ambiguous. Some will inevitably appear on more than one list. What is needed is a comprehensive universal list of all the volunteers for Spain, where nationality is just one facet, like occupation or political affiliation. This would go a long way towards eliminating double-counting and disputes.

In fact, this process has already begun. Sidbrint – short for Sistema d'Informació Digital sobre les Brigades Internacionals¹⁵ – is a trans-national research project based at the University of Barcelona with the aim of 'digitising the historical memory of the Spanish Civil War, the Brigaders and the International Brigades'. Hopefully, Sidbrint will manage to source some more funding and can build upon what has been a valuable start. It is, I think, a fitting memorial to the sacrifices of all the volunteers for Spain, no matter how many there were and what country they came from. ▲

¹Marx Memorial Library IBA Box C, File 8/5. ²Walter Levine, 'From Cheetham to Cordova', p39. ³Bill Alexander, 'British Volunteers for Liberty', p69. ⁴MML IBA Box C, File 16/1. ⁵John Angus, 'With the International Brigade in Spain', p9. ⁶See Moscow 35082/1/90, reproduced in Ronald Radosh, Mary M Habeck and Grigory Sevostianov (eds), 'Spain Betrayed: The Soviet Union in the Spanish Civil War', pp241-242. ⁷Lisa Kirschenbaum, 'International Communism and the Spanish Civil War', p85. ⁸Report by General Walter, 14 January 1938, Moscow 35082/1/95, cited in Radosh op cit, pp448-449. ⁹As James Hopkins states, 'there was always considerable tension between the Americans and the British' in James K Hopkins, 'Into the Heart of the Fire', pp73-274, fn26, pp412-413 and fn69, pp419-420. ¹⁰Michael Petrou, 'Renegades: Canadians in the Spanish Civil War', p17. ¹¹John Angus op cit, p6. ¹²Paul Philippou Strongos, 'Spanish Thermopylae: Cypriot Volunteers in the Spanish Civil War', 1936-39, p3. ¹³IBMT Newsletter, 17, January 2007, p8. ¹⁴IBMT Newsletter, 20, Spring 2008, p2. ¹⁵<http://sidbrint.ub.edu/de> (accessed on 8 March 2017).



Harry Pollitt (foreground, second from right) at Mas de las Matas, Aragon, in December 1937 with the first British Battalion banner.



After the original banner was captured or lost, this replacement was sent out to Spain in 1938. It currently hangs in the Marx Memorial Library, London.



Unaccounted for are the Major Attlee Company banner (above) and the Tom Mann Centuria banner (below).



High fly the banners

This article was first published in the November 1990 newsletter of the International Brigade Association. It was written by **BILL ALEXANDER (1910-2000)**, a former commander of the British Battalion in Spain, author of ‘British Volunteers for Liberty: Spain 1936-39’ (1982) and until his death the Secretary of the IBA.

I have been trying to collect information about the British Battalion banners. It is difficult – at the time, war took all our attention; memories after 50 years are often inconsistent.

The first recorded banner, before there was a battalion, had on it ‘Centuria inglesa antifascista Tom Mann – Disciplina proletaria vencerá al fascismo’. It was photographed in the Karl Marx Barracks, Barcelona, in September 1936 with Sid Avner (Stepney), Nat Cohen (Stepney) and his wife Ramona [Siles García], Tom Wintringham, Jack Barry (Australia) and Dave Marshall (Middlesbrough). [Also pictured is Giorgio Trioli.] The photo is reproduced in ‘British Volunteers for Liberty’. No-one knows who made the banner; no-one knows what happened to it. But we do know that the group established a firm record and tradition of anti-fascist struggle.

The first battalion banner was presented by Harry Pollitt [General Secretary of the Communist Party] at Christmas 1937 at Mas de las Matas. There is a photograph of the ceremony in Bill Rust’s book ‘Britons in Spain’. The Artists International Association was asked – probably by Harry – to produce the banner. The AIA was a vigorous, influential group whose aim was to mobilise ‘the international unity of artists against fascism’. Many of the group became nationally known painters. Felicia Browne, our first casualty in Spain, was a member.

The banner was designed by James Lucas and the embroidery

organised by his wife Phyllis. It was a big, urgent task. Kath Weaver (King), who was at art college, recalls being pressed into helping and working evening and night to get it completed for Pollitt, JBS Haldane and Bill Rust to take to Spain. The pole was surmounted by a clenched fist in metal, probably aluminium, which was made by Betty Rea, a leading sculptor.

Then after the Christmas festivities – Hookey Walker’s fat pig and walnuts – the battalion went into the battles of Teruel and Segura de los Baños. It is possible that the banner was then lost in the fascist breakthrough.

A call went to London for a replacement banner. Kath King, again drawn into its production, said the design was the same, the urgency was the same, but less expensive material had to be used. Again, it is probable that Harry Pollitt brought it out.

Eventually the banner got back to Britain and began to serve a new phase in battalion activity. It was outside the Franco embassy night after night in the protests against his terror; it headed many marches in all sorts of weather; it has been displayed at the unveiling of many memorials. At the ceremony in Jubilee Gardens it was proudly held aloft by Robert Hodgson, the son of Bert, who so often carried No.1 Company banner in Spain. Now it often covers the remains of good comrades who have had to fall out in the Good Fight. It is worn and tattered in this long service.

Next to appear was the banner of the No.1 Major Attlee Company of the British Battalion of the XVth Brigade. There are photographs in ‘Britons in Spain’ and ‘British Volunteers for Liberty’ with company commander ‘Taffy’ Evans, of Kenfig Hill, South Wales, on one side and Morris Davies (Treharris) on the other. No-one seems to know what happened to it.

This was the banner carried at the head of the battalion when it marched at Marsá and Chabola Valley, before the Ebro crossing. Bert Hodgson (Middlesbrough) appears in an often reproduced photo carrying the banner. The banner appears in much of our publicity with a Spanish comrade as the battalion banner bearer. Can anyone remember his name?

Then there is the very large banner which we had framed, mounted and fixed to the wall in the Marx Memorial Library as part of our archives. A photograph in postcard form is still available, price 35p. Every one of our battle honours is embroidered, from Madrid, November 1936, to the very last battle on the Sierra Caballs, 23/24 September 1938.

The banner was made and presented to the battalion by the ‘women of Barcelona’. No-one knows who they were. Did other battalions receive one? No other battalion has one today – understandably since only the British, Lincolns and Mac-Paps were able to return home without imprisonment or severe repression. No-one is sure when the banner was presented. It could not have been designed and made in time for the XVth Brigade parade at Marsá on 5 October or the 35th Division parade on 17 October. We do know that Sam Wild brought it home in his ruck-sack. After Sam and Betty’s death it was cleaned, framed, mounted and unveiled in the [Marx Memorial] Library.

The Scottish Area of the NUM [National Union of Mineworkers] presented to our members in Scotland a replica of the battalion banner, but with special mention of Scotland’s contribution. It is now in the People’s Palace, Glasgow. ▲



GIFT: Though Bill Alexander says this banner, which hangs in London’s Marx Memorial Library, was made and presented to the British Battalion by the ‘women of Barcelona’, the 1977 issue of the MML’s bulletin tells a different story. Referring to the library’s archive of Spanish Civil War artefacts, the article asks: ‘Where else could one find, for example, the authentic banner, lovingly embroidered by the women of Ripoll, a small town in Catalonia where the British Battalion waited for repatriation...?’



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

Dolores's telling admission about turnout at the IBMT conference

This year's Len Crome Memorial Conference (see photos on page 3) was a marvellous event. The main speakers, Richard Baxell and Giles Tremlett, were excellent, and the varied programme of two talks, a film and a musical finale kept the large audience at the Manchester Conference Centre engaged all day.

Congratulations are therefore due to Manchester-based IBMT Trustee Dolores Long and the rest of the team in the North-West who organised everything.

In her concluding remarks to the conference, Dolores, the daughter of Sam Wild, last commander of the British Battalion in Spain, and Bessie Berry, an activist in Manchester's Aid Spain movement, speculated on what her parents would have thought of the occasion.

'I think they would have been amazed, and very moved, that so many people, 80 years later, would be spending a Saturday remembering the Spanish Civil War,' she said.

This was the fifth year running that our lecture day was hosted in Manchester. Before 2013, the venue had always been the Imperial War Museum in London. There is now a proposal to move the event to Bristol. Wherever it goes, the 2017 conference day has given us a hard act to follow, whether next year or beyond.

How to elect our Executive Committee?

Nothing has been agreed yet, but changes are being considered to the way that the IBMT's Executive Committee is elected.

The Executive Committee is made up of the IBMT's four officers – President, Chair, Secretary and Treasurer – plus, starting from this year's Annual General Meeting, another 10 elected members (currently 11). Together they are the Trustees of the IBMT. We are a registered charity and Trustees have important statutory obligations

under charity law, as well of course as responsibility for the management of the IBMT.

The current electoral system, as set out in our constitution, requires the entire Executive Committee – except for the President – to be elected every year at the AGM.

There is now a consensus among Trustees that we need to inject greater democracy, transparency and stability into this election process.

Our existing system worked well when the IBMT was first set up in 2001. Then we were a small group made up of International Brigade veterans, family and friends and a few historians. Most people knew everyone else. But the IBMT has expanded considerably since then and we now have nearly 1,000 members.

Our growth is to be welcomed, as a bigger membership gives us vital additional strength, both financial and human, to carry out our mission

We need to inject greater democracy, transparency and stability into this election process.

of keeping alive the memory and spirit of the anti-fascist volunteers who went to Spain.

But it also means that allowing roughly 50 members – the usual number present at AGMs – in whichever town or city that the AGM is being held that year to select the Executive Committee makes us vulnerable to an unrepresentative faction, whether political or geographical, sweeping the board in an election.

One option being looked at is individual online voting. Postal balloting has been ruled out because of its considerable costs. Another approach would be to move to three-yearly

Tarancon Digital



DEFACED: It was shocking to see that the memorial in Tarancon to the Scottish Brigaders killed in the Battle of Jarama was vandalised with red paint, presumably by Spanish neo-fascists, just days before the 80th anniversary commemoration at the memorial (see page 4). Listing the 39 Scots of the British Battalion who died at Jarama in February 1937, the memorial was thankfully immediately cleaned up by the local authorities. These continuing attacks on International Brigade memorials in Spain only serve to underline the importance of the work of the IBMT and other International Brigade memorial groups in Spain and elsewhere.



CHEERS: Good to see that our Spanish friends in the AABI International Brigades memorial group and the Jarama '80 project have brought out a commemorative beer to mark the 80th anniversary of the Battle of Jarama in February 1937. Like our own commemorative tipple Brigadista Ale (available from Drinkswell: www.drinkswell.co.uk/product/3036/Brigadista_Ale.html), it's a craft beer – and proceeds go of course to a good cause.

elections, or to elect only three of four members each year to serve three-year terms – thus bolstering the stability of the Executive Committee. We could also switch to electing members of the Executive Committee as a single unit – rather than having separate contests for officers and other members.

Any amendments to our constitution to change our voting procedures must first be approved by an AGM – our next is to be held in Cardiff on 14 October – and will be circulated to members beforehand. So watch this space.

Subscription rates also under scrutiny

Also currently under consideration by the Executive Committee are our subscription rates. These have been increased only once since the IBMT was established more than 15 years ago, yet every year we are busier and our expenditure unavoidably rises. Last year, for example, we launched the fortnightly *IBMT eNewsletter* – a vital new service for members.

Any increases would not come into force until January 2018 at the earliest. If and when this happens I hope everyone will understand why they are necessary, and will continue to support the IBMT.

Jim Jump

IBMT Secretary

secretary@international-brigades.org.uk

Join the IBMT now and help keep alive the memory and spirit of the volunteers

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LEFT: Joan Miró creates 'Le Faucheur' for the Spanish Republic's pavilion at the international fair in Paris in 1937.

RIGHT: Picasso's 'Guernica' in the Paris pavilion and (far right) works by Picasso, Miró and others at the Mayoral Gallery, London, in 2017. In the foreground of both photos is an Alexander Calder sculpture: 'Mercury Fountain' in 1937 and, at the Mayoral, 'Crag with Yellow Boomerang and Red Eggplant' (1974).



When art made history

MARSHALL MATEER admires a London exhibition paying homage to the Spanish Republic's legendary pavilion at the Paris international fair during the Spanish Civil War

In 1937 volunteers on their way to Spain through Paris were taken in groups to see the Spanish Republic's pavilion at the International Exposition of Art and Technology of Modern Life.

Earlier this year London's Mayoral Gallery brought together artworks and archive materials relating to the 1937 pavilion, itself a modernist building by architects Josep Lluís Sert and Luis Lacasa. There were works by Joan Miró, Picasso, Alexander Calder and Julio González in the entrance area, as was the case in 1937. Displays about the Republic's programme for economic and social progress and the on-going war effort were in a second gallery downstairs – it was upstairs in the original pavilion.

Miró's mural 'Le Faucheur' (The Reaper) was painted directly onto the panels of the pavilion and was lost after it was dismantled. For the Mayoral show, it was recreated by digital printing in black, greys and white – there are no colour photographs existing – filling a space at the rear of the gallery, from floor to ceiling. On close inspection the lines of the panels and the screw heads fixing them to the pavilion structure are quite visible, underlining that this was painted for a temporary exhibition.

In photographs we see Miró, paintbrush in hand, looking a little uncertain, standing high on a ladder – he described the act of painting as 'direct and brutal', with only 'a few light sketches' to guide him. In the finished painting we see the figure of a Catalan peasant standing, a giant being, against a starry sky – stars symbolise freedom in Miró's iconography. On his great head is the ancient symbol of Catalan identity, the *barretina*, a red cap. The supporting neck or body is a trunk growing from the soil of his ancestors; he is literally rooted to the spot; he will stand his ground. The right arm is raised; there are five fingers in a clenched fist salute. The left arm is raised too holding a mighty sickle. About the sickle Miró said 'it is the reaper's symbol, the tool of his work, and, when his freedom is threatened, his weapon'.

Earlier in 1937 Miró used the Catalan peasant motif with a huge clenched fist salute and again wearing the *barretina* – a design now ubiquitous on t-shirts and posters – for that smallest of formats, the postage stamp declaring 'Aidez l'Espagne'. Under a print made from the design in Miró's handwriting is written: 'In this present battle, I see on the fascist side just the outdated forces, and, on the other side, the people whose immense creative resources which will give Spain a power which will astonish the whole world.'

If Picasso – whose 'Guernica' was commissioned for the Paris pavilion – and Miró made their stance with one foot firmly set in their cultural traditions, it was the American Alexander Calder, a friend of Miró's, who jumped into the future with both feet with an astounding sculptural piece that presages current art practice to a much greater extent than either 'Guernica' or 'The Reaper'.

Calder's 'Mercury Fountain' is just that – an assemblage of steel shapes and rods rising over a pool of deadly, glistening mercury. It was created for the people of Almadén in the mountains north of Córdoba, at that time under siege by Franco's troops and being defended at one point by, amongst others, a group of British and Irish International Brigades.

Almadén was no ordinary town – it was a mining centre delivering 60 per cent of the world's mercury, an essential ingredient in the production of munitions, for instance detonators for bombs, making it a great prize for the Republic but also a prime target for the Nationalists and of high interest to Germany and big business interests in the US.

'Guernica', Picasso's painting, now in Madrid, was of course not at the Mayoral Gallery, nor did they try to recreate it. However, displayed on a wall downstairs were 64 small panels under the title 'Guernica'. Arranged into four horizontal rows and seen from a distance the mechanical grid was enlivened by the black, grey and white shapes on each panel being different – like shadows of leaves on a tiled wall, it has life.

Move closer and the little panels are revealed as the pages of a booklet. The booklet, probably made in 1937, is anonymous and there is no publisher information printed anywhere on it. The pages reproduce photographs, documents, poetry, descriptions, statements, witness accounts – some Spanish text, some English – about the devastating bombing of the town of Guernica on 26 April 1937.

In recognition of its London location, Mayoral included archive material of British artists' responses to the events in Spain, such as the catalogue



of a Felicia Browne exhibition, publications by the Artists International Association and notices of the British tour of 'Guernica'. Framed on the wall is a 'broadsheet' (pictured left) published for the 1937 International Surrealist Exhibition in London in which both Miró and Picasso were exhibited. Visually the dense text is relieved by an abstract overprint in red designed by Henry Moore.

The pamphlet marks the moment when pacifism was giving way to the inevitable consequences of the impending

European conflict. It cites the use of 'the century-old Act on Foreign Enlistment' against volunteers while allowing 'free passage to Franco's agents' yet refusing to admit 'representatives of THE SPANISH PEOPLE'. In its concluding paragraphs the pamphlet proclaims in heavy type: 'If only in self-defence we must END ALL FORMS OF NON-INTERVENTION, INTERVENE IN THE FIELD OF POLITICS, INTERVENE IN THE FIELD OF IMAGINATION.'

Intervening in the field of imagination is a phrase that might well be applied to Miró and the other artists at the Mayoral Gallery exhibition. ▲

Marshall Mateer is the IBMT Film Coordinator. This is an edited version of a longer review that appears on the IBMT News & Blog page (see www.international-brigades.org.uk/blog/blog).

Bill Thornycroft

By Jim Jump

Francis 'Bill' Thornycroft, who died in London on 9 February 2017 at the age of 90, was a political activist and member of a Sussex family that became steeped in the fight against fascism in Spain and in efforts to help those escaping the horrors of its civil war.

Born on 23 February 1926, Bill was the youngest of five children. Brother Christopher dropped out of studies at Oxford to join the International Brigades in December 1936. Eldest sister Kate was secretary of the Basque Children's Committee in their home town of Worthing – and would later enter the public eye as the wife of the US communist Hermann Field, arrested in Poland in 1949 and held for five years on suspicion of being a spy. The second of the three sisters, Priscilla, an artist (who currently lives in Dresden and celebrates her 100th birthday in April this year), was active in the Artists International Association and campaigned tirelessly for the Spanish Republic. Their mother, Dorothy, chaired the Worthing Basque Children's Committee and later ran the Worthing Refugee Committee, which helped Jews and left-wingers fleeing fascist Europe.

Bill remained true to his family's values throughout his life. He was an active IBMT member until deteriorating health made him housebound. He declared himself to be a communist until the end, though he had left the party many years ago in a row over his other great political passion, gay rights, for which he was a pioneering champion.

His parents were mechanical engineer Oliver Thornycroft and Dorothy Rose, daughter of Edward Rose, the playwright and *Sunday Times* theatre critic. She campaigned from an early age for votes for women and later against the invasions of Manchuria and Abyssinia. During the Spanish Civil War she became especially active, and was threatened with expulsion from the Labour Party for working with local communists.

'Mother made sure we knew we were lucky and drew my attention to the queue at the Labour Exchange, which was very long,' Bill wrote later in life. 'She brought home a boy my age, about 10, who could not go to school as he had no shoes. I was supposed to play with him while shoes were organised. We were both too shy to even speak.'

'Politics were always discussed. We took *The Times*, *Daily Worker* and *New Statesman* and subscribed to the Left Book Club. Mother took me with her to political things. I rode in the car when she picked up Haile Selassie, emperor of Abyssinia, from the station to take him to his hotel when he was going to speak at a meeting in Worthing Town Hall.'

The young Bill was also taken to Southampton in May 1937 to see nearly 4,000 Basque refugee children disembark from the *Habana* following their voyage from Bilbao. 'My main memory is of seeing them

coming down the companionway looking very bedraggled and the priests with sick down their black fronts.'

There was a 'colony' for some of the children at Beach House in Worthing, and Bill remembered them as 'very scruffy'. 'Mother told me a problem was that they hid food in the nooks and crevices of the old house, which was causing a plague of rats. They were afraid there would not be a next meal. Some had been starving.'

Though brought along to many local political and fundraising events – including one in which he recalled that Isabel Brown of the Spanish Medical Aid Committee had the audience in tears – Bill's involvement was confined to helping on stalls and buttering sandwiches. 'The war didn't have any direct effect on me, except I was very proud of my brother and this later lent me a bit of undeserved kudos in the Communist Party!' he wrote.

'Looking back I don't think my views about the war have changed but I now know we were right when we thought that the British Establishment was keen to help Franco but, at the time, we did not have the concrete evidence.'

This was a view he forcefully expressed in the *IBMT Newsletter* in 2013 (issue 1-2013) when he complained that the wording of the new plaque next to the International Brigade memorial on London's Southbank perpetuated the 'myth' that only Germany and Italy gave support to Franco. 'Without the covert support of France, and especially Britain, he might not have won,' Bill insisted.

From 1943 to 1946 Bill attended Chelsea College of Aeronautical and Automobile Engineering and afterwards worked in London as an aeronautical engineer for D Napier & Son until he was sacked in 1951 for his communist affiliation. The same fate awaited him at Elliot Brothers, where he lasted just two weeks, and at Westinghouse Brake & Signal Company. From 1953 until retirement he worked variously for Collets bookshop, Central Books and Progressive Tours, as a self-employed electrician and ran a grocery shop.

All the time he remained politically active – he was arrested, for example, on the Grunwick picket line in 1976, took part in a famous squat by gay activists in Brixton's Railton Road from 1974 to the early 1980s and more recently was a leading member of his local Stop the War group in south London. His last public outing for the IBMT was in May 2014, when, now in a wheelchair, he opened the IBMT's 'Antifascistas' and 'Sussex and the Spanish Civil War' displays at Newhaven Fort, Sussex. In his speech he once again took the opportunity to rail against the British government's betrayal of the Spanish Republic. ▲



BILL THORNYCROFT: In 2014 at Newhaven Fort.

Jim Jump is the IBMT Secretary.

ANTIFASCISTAS: THE IBMT EXHIBITION THAT TELLS THE STORY OF THE VOLUNTEERS



To borrow the exhibition for display at a local event contact our Exhibition Coordinator:
president@international-brigades.org.uk / tel: 020 7253 8748

Magnificent play brought back memories

We have just come home from watching 'Dare Devil Rides to Jarama' at Swanland Village Hall. The play was magnificent. The script was clever, acting and singing were accomplished and committed, the set and its permutations were ingenious and the whole experience was memorable.

We hope in particular that our appreciation might reach Neil Gore and David Heywood, whose contributions brought something extra to the performance.

The whole performance was wonderful. It was lovely to see the level of audience participation, how many of them knew the chorus of 'I'm a



NEIL GORE: In 'Dare Devil Rides to Jarama'.

Rambler', the nods of recognition and the response to the financial appeal for assistance towards the erection of a memorial to the Hull and East Riding volunteers.

Thank you all very much. In the dark days of the right-wing populism typified by the manner of the Brexit campaign and Trump's victory, the play lit up an alternative set of values.

My father was from a respectable Suffolk family. His unwed sister, Chloe, became pregnant and went to Spain in 1935 with his married sister, Poppy, so Poppy could pretend to be the mother and Chloe could avoid the social shame.

Both became involved with the Republican cause. Poppy wrote articles for the American press to win recruits, medical and financial support. Chloe, heavily pregnant, was strongly attracted to the anarchists. Poppy claimed she left on the last boat out of Barcelona before the fascists arrived.

Returning to the UK, Poppy was involved with locating the 4,000 refugee Basque child refugees who arrived on the *Habana* in May 1937, pressing Labour peers to lend a spare wing in their houses for the Basque children. She set up and ran a community and school for some of the children in Ipswich.

Chloe continued to work with the families of political prisoners, whose existence was denied by Franco. As late as 1963 she was arrested by the Spanish police when taking aid to them and spent four nights in Spanish prisons before being deported.

Our family and I are very happy with four IBMT mugs we bought recently. Our oldest daughter is thinking of applying to the Hull City of Culture year for a small project, probably around the Basque child refugees (two houses in Hull) to shame our Government over its stalling on Syrian and Libyan refugees. Keep up your fine work.

Daniel and Lucy Vulliamy
Drifffield, Yorkshire

Hochschild's book is unfair to Soviet Union

It is a pity that Richard Baxell's otherwise excellent review of Adam Hochschild's 'Spain in Our Hearts' (issue 44) accepts, without question, the author's 'devil's pact' description of the relationship between Republican Spain and the Soviet Union. The truth is that both governments, unlike the imperialist countries, saw the need to defeat the growing fascist threat to Spanish national sovereignty and world peace represented by the Franco-Hitler-Mussolini axis. And for many on the left in every continent in 1936 the Soviet Union was a beacon of hope: as the US anarchist labour organiser Mother Jones put it, the Soviet Union had stood up to fascism and its people had overthrown the capitalist bosses.

It is also clear that Stalin and the Comintern offered help and advice only when it was requested by the Spanish Republic. The only important exception to this was the trial of the POUM leaders who from early 1937 onwards

had campaigned for an insurrectionary upsurge against the elected Popular Front government. This planned insurrection was made manifest in the Barcelona May Day events when, as Adam Hochschild acknowledges, tanks and guns which should have been at the anti-Franco war front were turned on pro-government forces causing hundreds of deaths. There is no doubt that local Soviet representatives lobbied the Republican government to interfere in due legal process to ensure that treason charges were endorsed by the courts. However, the Spanish Prime Minister, Juan Negrín, resisted these pressures. The POUM leaders were convicted of the less serious charge of 'rebellion against the state' and thereby spared the death penalty.

In his review Richard Baxell also quotes Orwell's charge, repeated by Hochschild, that the Communist Party used the exigencies of war to suppress the POUM. But given the May Day events and the attempted overthrow of the Republican government, is it any wonder that all sections of the Popular Front, and not just, as Orwell charges, the Communist Party, agreed with Negrín's decision to prosecute the POUM leaders before banning the

organisation? There was a war on and a clear message had to be sent to Republican supporters that acts of rebellion could not be tolerated if fascism was to be defeated. Orwell was so blinded by anti-communism that he could not grasp this simple truth.

Hochschild goes as far as to put the Soviet Union in the same league as the Franco regime. This is a calumny. Despite its sometimes barbarous history the Soviet Union under Stalin's leadership was transformed from an economically backward country with a largely illiterate population into a mighty industrial power whose working people enjoyed access to education and culture on a scale often not matched in highly industrialised capitalist countries.

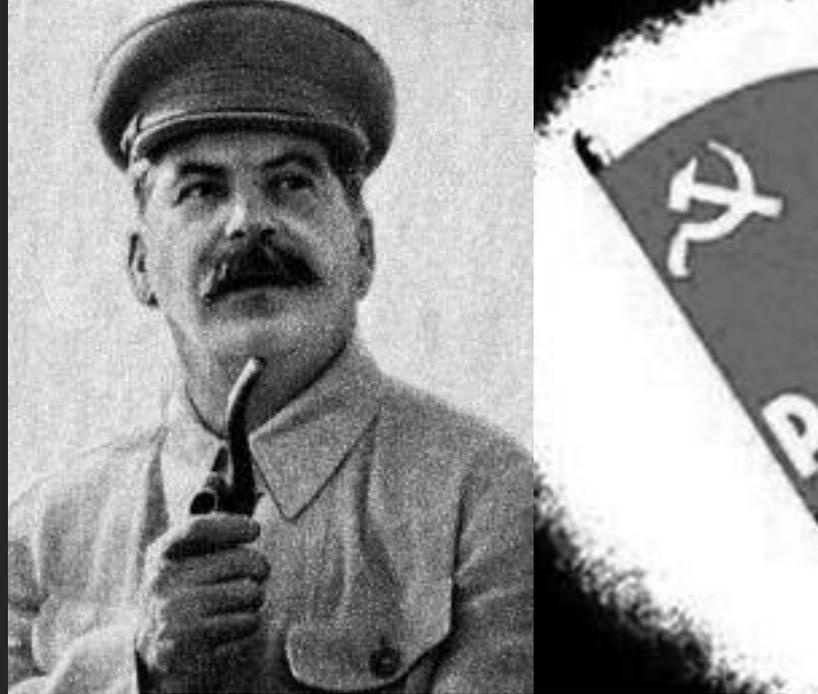
In this period the Soviet Union remained a staunch opponent of fascism and was the backbone of the alliance that saved the world from Nazi domination. By contrast Franco was a pygmy, whose record was one of unmitigated violence and cruelty as he returned Spain to medieval tyranny.

Tom Sibley
Hounslow

Spain and Stalin: truth, denials and betrayals

On this 80th anniversary of the Barcelona 'May Days' in 1937, when revolutionary fighters of the POUM clashed with the communist-backed Spanish Republican authorities, **VICTOR GROSSMAN** examines the continuing controversy over Stalin's involvement in Spain and the links to his brutal reign in the Soviet Union.

“It is hard to deny that, at least objectively, the POUM uprising in the Republic's main industrial city and so close to the front, though luckily short-lived, was an obvious godsend for Franco...”



The cause of Spain has been and still is constantly distorted and often besmirched, most commonly with the same charges, varying in intensity and sophistication, but always denouncing the role of the Soviet Union and most particularly its leader Joseph Stalin (pictured above) and the communists in Spain.

Sometimes one or the other massacre of rebels or priests is invoked, but almost always there is a return to the May 1937 events in Barcelona and the treatment of the POUM (Partido Obrero de Unificación Marxista). If coming from a 'left' direction, this may include a denunciation of the communists for abandoning the revolution which, to some, was more important than beating Franco.

One of the most fascinating German fighters in the Spanish Civil War was Fritz Teppich, from Berlin. Though not in the International Brigades, he was a captain in the Spanish Republic's army, having first served in an anarchist unit in the Basque region. He was always convinced that POUM people collaborated directly with the fascists, and he wrote at least one book to try to prove it.

For my part, I found his evidence too faded and fragmentary to be totally convincing. But it is hard to deny that, at least objectively, the POUM uprising in the Republic's main industrial city and so close to the front, though luckily short-lived, was an obvious godsend for Franco. Even George Orwell admits in some passages in 'Homage to Catalonia' that POUM actions which he engaged in were mistaken and harmful, and that the Juan Negrín government later showed more political tolerance than anyone had expected.

The killing of POUM leader Andrés Nin was a nasty act, committed almost certainly by the Soviet agent Alexander Orlov (who soon decided to skip off to Canada and then the US in 1938). But for me, regardless of debates about theory or the details of its beginnings, it was a shameful uprising. It is unfortunate that Ken Loach's all-too well-made film 'Land and Freedom' tried to defend and praise it.

Denigration

The related denigration of the Spanish Republic because it was supported by Stalin is equally wrong. No one can erase the fact that only two countries in the world supported the democratically-elected government of Spain: Mexico and the Soviet Union. While British ships blocked supplies for Spain through the Bay of Biscay, while France, led by socialist premier Léon Blum, blocked the rail lines into Spain and even the mountain routes of the volunteers, while both were imposing a general blockade, using the non-intervention misnomer but letting Hitler and Mussolini send planes, tanks and troops to Franco (and letting Texaco fuel them), the Soviets were risking and losing their lives shipping help through the Mediterranean. They sent some of their best experts to Spain along with as many tanks, planes, rifles and machine-guns as they could somehow get through – plus heart-



IN REMEMBRANCE: The memorial in Madrid's Fuencarral Cemetery to the 182 Soviet dead in the Spanish Civil War, most of them aviators.

FAR LEFT: Joseph Stalin ruled the Soviet Union from the mid 1920s until his death in 1953.



“ Nor can one dismiss the fate in the Gulag of the great defender of Madrid, Manfred Stern, the execution of the flying ace Jacob Smushkovich, who played a key part in the victory at Guadalajara, the murder of the great Soviet journalist Mikhail Kozlov...

felt humanitarian aid and support by countless Soviet citizens.

Why did the Soviets, the Comintern and the Spanish communists oppose further revolutionary take-overs of land and factories, as the POUM leaders demanded? Because they hoped until the very end that developments in Spain (which were determined, after all, by elected officials) should not provide excuses for the one-sided position of the Western countries. They always hoped – vainly, as it turned out – that working class movements in those countries might grow strong enough to force their governments to change their policies.

The USSR saw these hopes finally dashed by the West's toothless acceptance of the takeover of Austria in March 1938 and the treacherous abandonment of Czechoslovakia in September 1938 and March 1939. They were made possible by the Western betrayal of Spain and demonstrated that Chamberlain and Daladier preferred Hitler's fascism, love it or not, to the further existence of the Soviet Union or even of a truly 'People's Front' government in Spain. This sad realisation led to a countermove, the Hitler-Stalin Pact. And Hitler, with France now surrounded, felt sure of victory.

The Soviet Union was indeed beset at the time by all the powers of the earth in a life-or-death conspiracy aimed to contain, undermine and destroy it. Yet to view Stalin as an unblemished, innocent hero and to deny that he unleashed a reign of terror, whether in reaction to these threats or due to his own personality and the centuries-old, brutal history of Russia up to and including its civil war, are absolutely untenable.

The original motivation of the October Revolution of 100 years ago and the subsequent monumental achievements of a previously embittered, divided and largely uneducated population, which grew strong enough to defy the Nazis (and later threats from further west), was tragically marred by that miasma of denunciation and murder that engulfed the Soviet Union.

Nor can one dismiss the fate in the Gulag of the great defender of Madrid, Manfred Stern ('General Kléber'), the execution of the flying ace Jacob Smushkovich, who played a key part in the victory at Guadalajara, the murder of the great Soviet journalist Mikhail Kozlov, who described the fight for Madrid better than any other writer, and of his true love, the young German writer Maria Osten.

I have personally known too many widows or children of brave, devoted anti-fascists and communists murdered by Stalin's men as 'agents of the Nazis', as well as some who survived the Gulag – and remained devoted to the cause. How many great people were lost! There were Soviet citizens of all nationalities, many, many Germans, Bulgarians, those who, thanks to Stalin, were hung or criminalised in Czechoslovakia (like André Simone and Artur London), the great Hungarian officer in Spain, László Rajk, and my wonderful Polish friend Dora Kleinová, a young doctor in Spain, a Resistance fighter in France, heroine in Auschwitz and survivor of Ravensbrück, who was imprisoned for five years in Czechoslovakia in the Stalin-ordered repression.

Tragedy

This was the other great tragedy of the 20th century: how a cause so many of us believed in, for we saw that the Soviet Union had thrown out the monopolies, that it was on the side of the common people in so many struggles, was also bloodily tainted by the suspicious, power-hungry rule of Joseph Stalin.

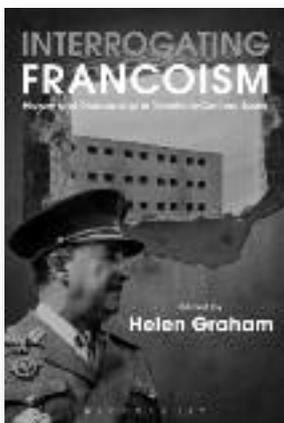
Of course, those brutal blunders are constantly misused by those who, in attacking Stalin, wish to denounce the momentous achievements of the Soviet people in peace and war, and then expand this denunciation, even equating the Soviet Union with barbaric Hitler's Germany.

I reject such falsifications, including the reduction of Spanish heroism to a false story of the POUM in Barcelona or a crude denial of the role of the Soviets in saving Madrid and Spain as long as it was possible. Lies and distortions must be vigorously exposed. But the truth, as close and as balanced as we can achieve it, is surely the best way to win new generations for the fight against fascists, for international solidarity, and for a better future. ▲

Victor Grossman is a US-born writer, activist and author of 'Crossing the River: A Memoir of the American Left, the Cold War and Life in East Germany'. He settled in the German Democratic Republic in the 1950s and now lives in Berlin.

Keeping Spain's ghosts alive

Durability of Francoism explained in this tribute to Paul Preston



'Interrogating Francoism: History and Dictatorship in Twentieth-Century Spain' edited by Helen Graham (London: Bloomsbury, 2016) £21.99.

Reviewed by Alejandro Quiroga

Interrogating Francoism' is a tribute to Professor Paul Preston, the foremost historian of contemporary Spain. It brings together a number of distinguished academics of 20th century Spain to analyse the origins, development and

corrosive legacy of the Franco dictatorship. The book also includes a commentary on biographies of Franco written by Enrique Moradiellos, an interview with Paul Preston, a comprehensive bibliography of his work and a list of PhDs supervised by the London School of Economics professor. Helen Graham, herself one of the leading scholars of contemporary Spain, has been the person responsible for this *Festschrift*. The result is a first-rate collection of wide-ranging yet coherently integrated essays.

The editor has structured the volume in three main parts: the endurance of the old regime, making dictatorship and making memory. The first set of chapters explore the continued existence of the old power hierarchies, values and myths in the social battles for reform in 1930s Spain. Maria Thomas's chapter on the Church shows that current attitudes towards the institution are shaped by perceptions and memories of Catholic experiences during the Second Republic, the civil war and the Franco dictatorship. Francisco Romero Salvadó's essay on the crown and the military cupola's increasingly authoritarian drift during

Conservative governments of the 2000s and 2010s have been instrumental in denying moral and legal justice, arguing that reparations would re-open old wounds.

the Restoration monarchy also reveals the long-standing opposition to bottom-up reforms and democratisation in 20th century Spain.

As explained by Helen Graham in her chapter on the Second Republic, the reforms attempted during the democratic era faced a number of serious challenges because of deficient, at times contradictory, strategies and structural factors related to Spain's uneven development. On top of these shortcomings, the Republic's reforming efforts took place in a Spanish society with deeply-rooted practices of political violence. These violent procedures were commonplace elsewhere in Europe, but in the case of the Spanish Republic were to have fatal consequences for the democratic regime.

European trends were also to shape the Franco dictatorship. The

second part of the book opens with Isabelle Rohr's analysis of Francoist anti-Semitism. The regime blended modern racial anti-Semitism with traditional Christian anti-Judaic views to demonise all sorts – Republicans, left-wingers and liberals – as the 'anti-nation'. Anti-Semitism thus became an essential component of the Spanish (and European) conservative discourse that defended the need for far-reaching social cleansing of the 'internal enemy'.

This social purge was not merely rhetorical. As shown in Rúben Serém's chapter on the genocidal regime imposed in Seville by General Queipo de Llano following the 17/18 July 1936 military uprising, the rebels set out to physically exterminate, at least partially, the constituencies that were considered to be the 'anti-nation', the 'enemy within'.

Yet Nazi Germany and Fascist Italy were to inspire Francoist domestic policies well beyond repression. Ángel Viñas's essay demonstrates that fascist principles were applied to the organisation, the law, the economy and the foreign policy of a Franco dictatorship forged during the civil war. The end result of German and Italian influence on Franco's dictatorship was the creation of a fascist state and polity in Spain.

As in the case of Hitler and Mussolini, Franco's fascist state waged war on its own citizens via concentration camps, arbitrary executions, forced labour battalions, torture chambers and martial law. But, unlike the German and Italian dictators, Franco continued his reign of terror after the Axis powers were defeated in 1945. Jorge Marco's chapter on the 1940s is a compelling analysis of the harsh conditions endured by Spain's civilian population in a society marked by mass killing, punishment, segregation, confinement and forced displacement.

The book's third part explores the role of memories of the civil war and the Franco regime during and after the dictatorship. Michael Richards persuasively argues that the rural migrant workforce that moved to the cities with a fresh memory of repression began to interact in the 1950s and 1960s with some more liberal urban middle-class sectors, which still held memories of support for the Second Republic. The outcome of this interaction was the promotion of democratic ideas among these urban middle classes that were eventually to form the social basis of Spain's transition to democracy in the 1970s.

Julián Casanova's contribution concentrates on the 'memory wars' of late 20th and early 21st century Spain. After 1989, Spain was caught between two currents in a particularly difficult memory juncture. A number of civic initiatives demanded the creation of truth commissions, sought justice and began to commemorate the victims of Francoism.

Yet these attempts of restitution came hard against ultranationalist groups in the Spanish media, judiciary and political system, determined to hinder civic policies on memory and public remembrance of the victims of the dictatorship. Conservative governments of the 2000s and 2010s have been instrumental in denying moral and legal justice, arguing that reparations would re-open old wounds.

However, it is precisely this lack of recognition that keeps the past alive. It seems difficult for the past to pass away until the ghosts of Francoism are publicly exorcised and the victims of the dictatorship legally compensated.

At the centre of many of these history debates is Paul Preston, for his work is widely read and he is a media star in Spain. The mass market appeal of his books and his public appearances have turned Preston into a sort of *bête noir* of neo-Francoist commentators and conservative

scholars, which in turn emphasises the pertinence of this book's evaluation of his academic work and legacy.

'Interrogating Francoism' is more than a classic tribute book. The volume covers much of 20th century Spanish history, coherently inserts Spain's past into the European framework and engages with current historiographical debates. It will be useful not only to undergraduate and postgraduate students but also to all those interested in Spain's difficult past and convulsive present. It certainly deserves a wide readership. ▲

Alejandro Quiroga teaches history at Newcastle University.

Aragon peasants against a merciless ruling class



'A Most Uncivil War' by Nicolas Lalaguna (Matador, Leicester: 2016) £9.99

Reviewed by Alan Lloyd

As someone who does not normally read fiction, I had some doubts as to whether the historical context in this book would be taken seriously. However, having become quickly engrossed in the story, it was obvious that the author has not made any attempt to

romanticise or to soften either the struggles of the Spanish peasants just to survive or the merciless attitude of the Spanish ruling class.

Apart from a brief episode in Barcelona, this novel is set entirely in a village in rural Aragon. Beginning in 1917, and running through to the civil war, it centres around the life of Pedro, who has followed his father as supervisor for the local duke, ensuring his orders are carried out in the estate's gardens. Any sympathy Pedro ever feels for the plight of the peasants is always quickly dismissed as it could compromise his privileged position.

This is illustrated when he falls for a beautiful peasant girl, and a brief fling ends in a pregnancy. The hapless girl is immediately disowned by Pedro's widowed mother and aunt who put a story about that she had been plying her favours around the village. However, 'Christian duty' meant that she and the resultant son were taken in, and subjected to regular beatings and abuse as a maid. Another of her duties was to nursemaid Pedro's son from an arranged marriage which ended in death in childbirth.

Having been taken through the miserable feudal life of the village peasants, politics are properly introduced with the arrival of a somewhat mysterious Basque farmhand, who turns out to be an organiser for the CNT, the anarchists. He radicalises Pedro's illegitimate son, whilst the legitimate one is having his mind poisoned by a paedophile priest.

The story then moves towards the success of the Popular Front in 1936, which allows the reader to share in the hopes and joys of ambitions realised, with the collectivisation of the duke's estates, along with some healthcare and education. Next, of course, comes the intervention of Germany and Italy and all that entails.

Enjoyable seems to be the wrong word to use to describe this book, knowing that, whilst the characters may be fictional, most of the Spanish population were living in these types of circumstances for real. However, it is a gripping read and a great book to take on holiday or to give as a gift. I would suspect that members of the IBMT will also get a little more out of it by understanding the context in which the story is set. ▲

Alan Lloyd is a Southampton-based IBMT member and local historian.



BRITISH VOLUNTEERS IN THE SPANISH CIVIL WAR 1936-39

SPEAKERS INCLUDE:

PROFESSOR PAUL PRESTON

Author of *The Last Days of the Spanish Republic*

RICHARD BAXELL

Chair of the International Brigade Memorial Trust and author of *Unlikely Warriors*

PROFESSOR VALENTINE CUNNINGHAM

Editor of *The Penguin Book of Spanish Civil War Verse*

CARMEN NEGRIN

Granddaughter of Juan Negrin, the last prime minister of the Spanish Republic

A PUBLIC MEETING
AT FRIENDS' MEETING HOUSE
ST GILES, OXFORD

FRIDAY JUNE 9,
STARTING 8 PM
DOORS OPEN AT 7.30PM

Tickets are £5 on the door or £4 pre-booked. Please send a cheque (plus p&h) made out to the IBMT to John Haywood, 1 Queens Road, Banbury OX16 0EB.

Oxford International Brigade Memorial Committee invites IBMT members to the unveiling of a memorial to the Oxfordshire volunteers at 12 noon on Saturday 10 June at St Clement's, Oxford, at the junction of Headington Hill and Morrell Avenue.



**RAN KAN KAN
CAMINO DEL FLAMENCO
N A - M A R A**

LA PASIONARIA'S FAREWELL SPEECH
THE INTERNATIONALE

**BAR OPENS 7PM
MUSIC 7.45 - 11.30PM**

SATURDAY 10TH JUNE

A Concert in tribute to the men and women of Oxfordshire who fought for freedom in the Spanish Civil War 1936-39. All proceeds to the Oxford Memorial to be erected in honour of the Volunteers from Oxfordshire.

**ADVANCE TICKETS £15
BY 5TH JUNE OR £20 ON DOOR.**
Payable to IBMT. Available From:
John Haywood, 1 Queens Road, Banbury,
OX16 0EB a.jhaywood92@gmail.com
Tel: 07785235715

West Oxford Community Centre, Botley Road, OX2 0BT.
5 minutes from Railway Station. Plus car park.

On the Córdoba front

MARLENE SIDAWAY reviews
'International Brigades: Homage in Andalusia' by Gavin Fox and Carmelo Medina Casado (Blurb, London: 2017)
 £43.89 (softback) or £48.89 (HB)
www.blurb.co.uk/bookstore



GATHERING: Commemoration at the memorial to John Cornford and Ralph Fox in the Plaza de los Poetas in Lopera, where both were killed in December 1936.

GET ON THE EMAILING LIST FOR THE IBMT eNewsletter

Send us your email address (we won't pass it on to anybody else) and you'll receive our regular e-newsletter, with all the latest news and information about forthcoming events. Contact: [admin@international-brigades.org.uk].

INTERNATIONAL BRIGADE Memorial Fund
www.international-brigades.org.uk

14 April 2017

Banners for Spain exhibition opens next month

BANNERS FOR SPAIN
 A Memorial Exhibition 1936-1939

BAHARRAT FOR SPAIN
 A Memorial Exhibition 1936-1939

Location: Museum of the 18th of July, London EC4P 3DF will be opening an exhibition of 100-120 Spanish banners from 1936 to 1939, along with other artefacts and film footage about the International Brigades and the Civil War struggle in Spain.

The exhibition will be accompanied by an extensive programme of related activities, including oral history interviews and an opportunity to watch the Spanish Civil War exhibition at the Museum of London.

For more information, download all details on our website, contact our Bookshop, contact our Bookshop, or contact our Bookshop. For the Museum of London, contact our Bookshop, or contact our Bookshop.

Other events from the Museum of London, including our exhibition about the International Brigades, will be held during the event.

For the full programme see our website, contact our Bookshop, or contact our Bookshop.

Oxford memorial to be unveiled on 10 June

INTERNATIONAL BRIGADE Memorial Fund
www.international-brigades.org.uk

13 March 2017

IBMT conference this weekend

LIBERTY'S VOLUNTEERS
 A Memorial Exhibition 1936-1939

Location: Museum of the 18th of July, London EC4P 3DF will be opening an exhibition of 100-120 Spanish banners from 1936 to 1939, along with other artefacts and film footage about the International Brigades and the Civil War struggle in Spain.

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INTERNATIONAL BRIGADE Memorial Fund
www.international-brigades.org.uk

1 February 2017

80th anniversary of the Battle of Brunate

BATAJIA DEL JUBILACION
 A Memorial Exhibition 1936-1939

Location: Museum of the 18th of July, London EC4P 3DF will be opening an exhibition of 100-120 Spanish banners from 1936 to 1939, along with other artefacts and film footage about the International Brigades and the Civil War struggle in Spain.

The exhibition will be accompanied by an extensive programme of related activities, including oral history interviews and an opportunity to watch the Spanish Civil War exhibition at the Museum of London.

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For those of us lucky enough to be on the 2016 'Homage to Andalusia', this book is a must. It is beautifully illustrated with photographs taken at every stage of the tour of International Brigade sites on the Córdoba front – from our first meeting in Córdoba when we were welcomed by Almudena Cros of the AABI (Asociación de Amigos de las Brigadas

Internacionales) to the moving last day at Lopera.

It was in the Battle of Lopera on 27-30 December 1936 that the newly formed English-speaking company in the French La Marseillaise Battalion suffered heavy casualties during an offensive to take the well defended town.

The book includes a brief history of the fighting in Andalusia involving the International Brigades – and the Spanish Civil War as a whole – with details of every place we visited in April last year – in Spanish and English, so, even if you weren't on the trip, it's a very attractive and informative book to possess.

Our first day began in Belalcázar, with a dedication for the memorial plaque outside the former American Hospital; then on to Valsequillo to inaugurate a memorial in the town square and to visit the famous railway station; afterwards on to La Granjuela, where we had a fraternal lunch and danced in the square to the music of the wonderful Irish musicians who were with us.

Later there was a reception with more music, readings and welcoming speeches from the minister of culture and other representatives from the Andalusian regional government. This was followed by the inauguration of the commemorative plaque to remember the International Brigaders who fought and died here. The plaque is next to one that commemorates those local people who suffered under the Franco regime.

The following day we visited Andújar, the nerve centre of operations during the fighting, and the railway station there was a particularly moving visit for many of us, as the 145 Brigaders from Britain and Ireland would have alighted



ATTENTIVE: School students in Belalcázar are told about the International Brigades.

there ready for the fateful battle between Christmas and New Year 1936. The story of the Battle of Lopera was recounted as we were standing on the ridge overlooking the hills and olive groves in which the Brigaders fought and 13 of the 19 British and Irish who gave their lives on the Córdoba front died.

After a lunch hosted by the local authorities, we visited the memorial to Ralph Fox and John Cornford in the garden dedicated to 'the English poets', where Gavin Fox read extracts from his uncle's letters.

The homage was a deeply emotional – even heart-breaking – experience for many of those whose relatives had been involved in the fighting in the region. But there was also the joy of a shared pride, and the glorious friendship and comradeship feeling which suffused the whole trip.

All the visits are brought to life by these photographs and accounts of everything that happened during those three days – if you weren't there, the book is the next best thing! ▲

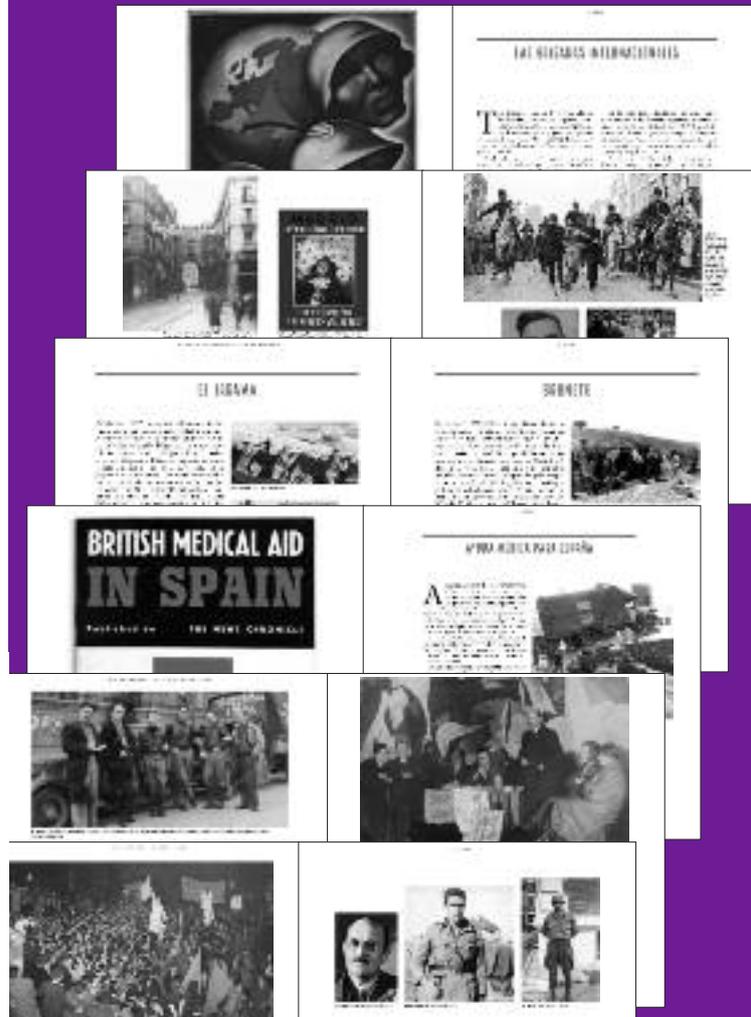
Marlene Sidaway is the IBMT President.

IBMT Magazine 2-2017



Spanish version of 'Antifascistas'

A Spanish edition of the IBMT's flagship 'Antifascistas' book has been published in Spain and is now on sale. Written by Richard Baxell, Angela Jackson and Jim Jump, the lavishly illustrated hardback book runs to 128 pages and contains additional text and images not in 'Antifascistas: British & Irish Volunteers in the Spanish Civil War', which was first published in 2010. 'Help Spain: Voluntarios británicos e irlandeses en la guerra civil española' also has an introduction written by leading Spanish historian Ángel Viñas. It can be ordered online for 20 euros plus p&p from the publisher: [www.pamiela.com/es/novedades/help-spain-detail].



The lessons of Spain

This article was written in 1975 by International Brigader **FRANK FARR**, then living in London, though previously from Leicester. Unpublished until now, it is in the IBMT Archive at the Marx Memorial Library in London. Farr's papers, including a diary of his time in Spain, were donated to the Trust in 2016 by his family. His article appears to have been written with the intention of it being published in Philip Toynbee's 'The Distant Drum', a collection of memoirs about the Spanish Civil War that was published in 1976.

To those of us who came back from Spain at the end of that war to be involved only months later in World War II, the whistle of bullets and the crash of bombs were easily forgotten.

Spain was a low-key war of meagre armament compared with what came later and our memories of it are more of people and politics than battlefields. I went out early, in 1936 with the first British ambulance unit, and came back finally more than two years later with the British Battalion of the XVth International Brigade. When I went we were confident of victory against Franco's army rebellion; when I returned we all knew that the war was lost. But the experiences in between led not so much to disillusionment as to a realistic awareness of what was militarily and politically possible.

Never before has there been such international unity in a single cause. Men of 50 nations made their way to Spain just to take a hand in someone else's war. Although mainly of the political left, there were men of all parties and none among the volunteers on the Republican side. Only a handful of committed fascists supported Franco in the field, except from the interventionist German and Italian forces.

When I arrived at the Aragon front with the first ambulance unit the line was held by volunteer militia units. They were organised into 'centurias' of 100 men each and commanded by centurians elected from their ranks. Everything was idealistically democratic and tactical decisions were taken by rank and file vote after endless discussions.

On one occasion when rain turned our crude trenches into muddy ditches, the Spanish centuria on the right flank of the sector voted themselves out of the mud and back to the comparative comfort of the village behind us. The German centuria on their left woke up in the morning to find their flank completely exposed. If the fascists facing us had known, they could have walked right through the lines without hindrance.

From this sort of anarchy to the organisation of a trained and disciplined army was a long step and it was not fully completed when the war ended. It looked strange to us to see huge posters around, well into the second year of the war, saying: 'The People's Army is necessary'. It seemed obvious to us. But to the Spanish anarchist and syndicalist elements the idea was not easy to swallow. Military organisation and discipline were alien to their ultra-democratic ideals.

Those huge cheering crowds at Victoria Station when we came off the train... woke us up to the fact that we represented far more in the political arena than our puny numbers had meant in the battlefield.

Frank Farr (centre) in Spain with unidentified companions.



Marx Memorial Library

When the International Brigades were formed, divided mainly into language groups, they set comparatively high standards of discipline. But cooperation with the new People's Army was bedevilled by political divisions and jealousies. The Internationals always felt that they got less than their fair share of help from the over-stretched supporting arms, aircraft, tanks and artillery, to say nothing of simple small arms ammunition.

After I had left the ambulances to join the Brigade in the last year of the war I found the [British] Battalion about 80 per cent composed of raw young recruits straight out of home. For two or three weeks we camped around the countryside armed with quite good new Czech rifles but no ammunition at all. Then we handed them in and received a consignment of 'Mexicanskis' plus ammunition. Training consisted of firing five rounds per man. Then we went into our first action at Gandesa and the new rifles got hot and jammed in the first few minutes of firing.

This was my first and last action as an infantryman. I was wounded, spent three months in hospital, nearly died of typhoid and associated illnesses, and finished up in the central barracks outside Barcelona as *comisario de guerra* for all the XVth, a post carrying duties a cross between adjutant and chaplain to all members of the Brigade passing through, from new recruits to wounded coming out of hospitals and back into the line.

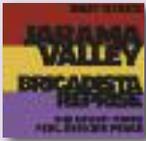
By this time the depleted ranks of the Internationals were being filled up with Spanish conscripts. They were not too keen to go to war and, despite the strident propaganda designed to keep up morale, few of them believed any longer that the Republic could win.

Our own men, too, were war weary and thinking only of getting home alive. Pep talks by political activists met a cynical reception and a distribution of cigarettes seemed more important than a battle. It was not until we came home, excited and happy, that we realised what a great historical event we had taken part in. Those huge cheering crowds at Victoria Station when we came off the train, the bands and banners, hysterical relatives and spontaneous public reactions woke us up to the fact that we represented far more in the political arena than our puny numbers had meant in the battlefield.

Only much later on, after serving in London through the Blitz and then in North Africa and Italy, did I realise fully what we had lacked in Spain in the way of organisation, equipment and sheer military experience. Looking back on it I would not have missed the Spanish experience for anything. The friends I made and lost alone made it worthwhile. But if such a situation arose again I could not honestly encourage my son and his contemporaries to go. Soldiering is for soldiers, not for enthusiastic amateurs. ▲

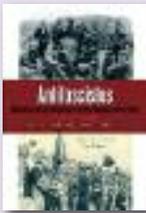
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Proceeds help fund our commemorative, educational and publicity work



CD single

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Antifascistas

British and Irish Volunteers in the Spanish Civil War
The story of the volunteers in words and pictures, by Richard Baxell, Angela Jackson and Jim Jump (paperback).
£15 plus £2.99 p&p



Poems from Spain

Collection of poems written by British and Irish International Brigaders. Edited by Jim Jump (paperback).
£10 plus £2.99 p&p



Tom Mann Centuria t-shirt

Made for the IBMT by t-shirt specialists Philosophy Football from ethically sourced cotton. Tom Mann Centuria banner on front. 'International Brigade Memorial Trust' on sleeve. Available in S, M, L, XL, XXL and fitted women's size (see British Battalion t-shirt for size details).
SPECIAL OFFER: £8 plus £3.99 p&p



British Battalion t-shirt

In red or grey and made for the IBMT by t-shirt specialists Philosophy Football from ethically sourced cotton. British Battalion banner on front and 'International Brigade Memorial Trust' on sleeve. Available in:
S (36inch/90cms chest)
M (40inch/100cms)
L (44inch/110cms)
XL (48inch/120cms)
XXL (52inch/130cms)
Fitted women's (34-36inch/70-90cms).
£15 plus £3.99 p&p



15th International Brigade t-shirt

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, M, L, XL, XXL and fitted women's size (see British Battalion t-shirt for size details).
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Connolly Column t-shirt

Black cotton t-shirt with design (pictured) in Spanish Republican colours across chest commemorating the volunteers from Ireland. Available in S, M, L, XL.
SPECIAL OFFER: £8 plus £3.99 p&p



¡No Pasarán! bag

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

Reproduction of the British Battalion No.1 Company flag named after Labour Party leader Clement Attlee. 150cms x 87cms. Red background with dark gold lettering. Ideal for carrying on marches or simply putting on the wall.
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Volunteers for Liberty plate

Highly decorative commemorative plate made in Staffordshire by Heraldic Pottery exclusively for the IBMT. Fine bone china. 10 1/2 inch (265mm) diameter. Re-issue of the much sought after 50th anniversary plate produced by International Brigade veteran Lou Kenton. Includes mount for wall display.
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Solid metal badge with International Brigade medal in centre and 'International Brigade Memorial Trust' around the edge.
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Postcards

Selection of posters from the Spanish Civil War in postcard format. Six for £5 plus £2.99 p&p. Postcard of British Battalion banner also available for £1



IBMT greetings card

Measuring approximately 15cm x 10cm, the IBMT greetings card features a drawing by Rafael Alberti dedicated to the International Brigades in 1996. Blank inside.
£5 for pack of 6 (including envelopes) plus £1.99 p&p



Clenched fist sculpture

Life-sized sculpture in specially treated concrete. Based on the clenched fist created by sculptor Betty Rae at the top of the pole for the original British Battalion banner. 23cms high. The clenched fist was the iconic salute of the Popular Front and is still used by anti-fascists around the world.
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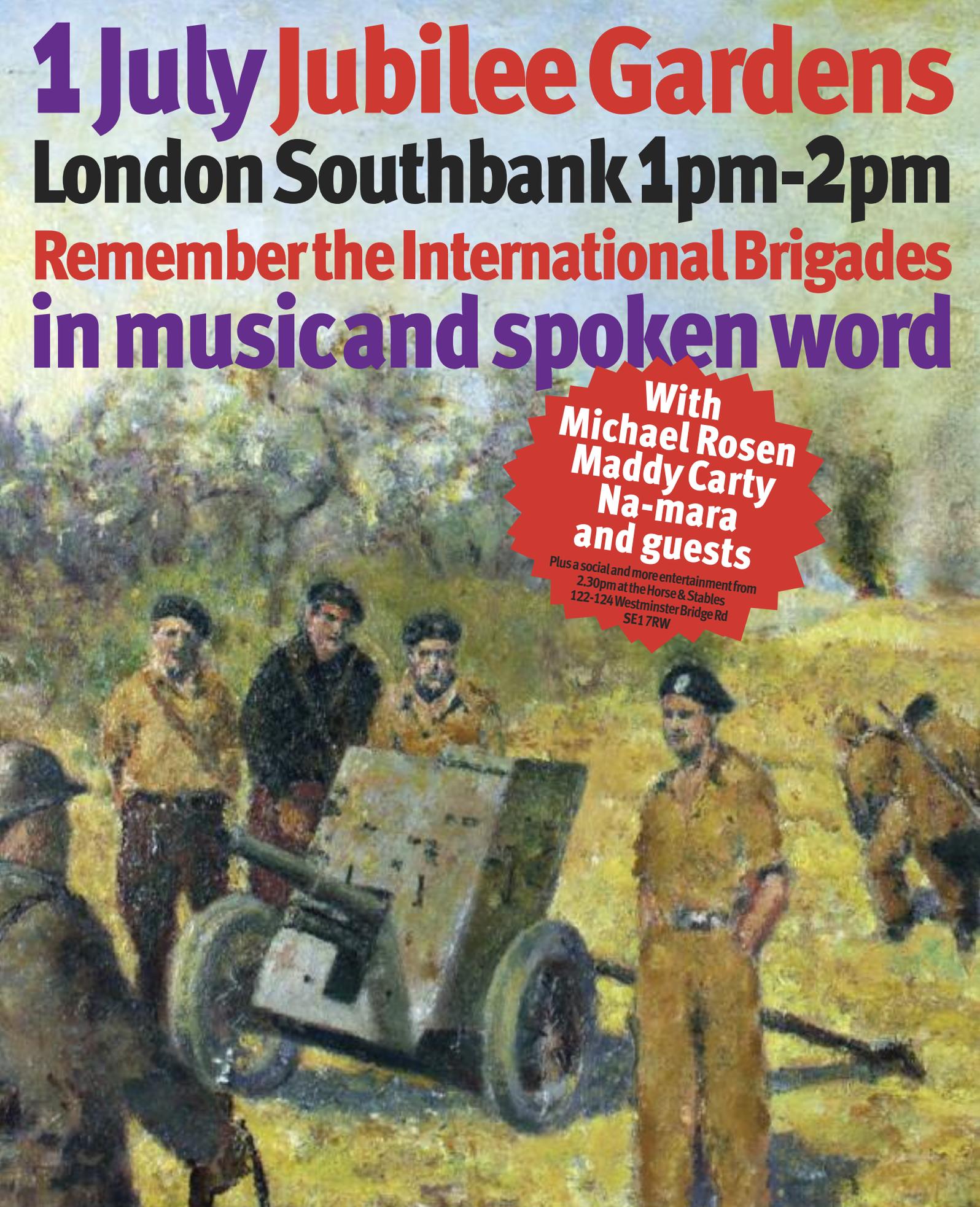
For orders outside the UK or to pay by credit card or PayPal, go to our website: [www.international-brigades.org.uk/merchandise.php] where there are also other items listed for sale.

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1 July Jubilee Gardens London Southbank 1pm-2pm Remember the International Brigades in music and spoken word

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Maddy Carty
Na-mara
and guests

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International Brigade Memorial Trust
www.international-brigades.org.uk

