



IBMT Magazine

www.international-brigades.org.uk

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INTERNATIONAL BRIGADE MEMORIAL TRUST

GEORGE
TURNILL

British Battalion
International Brigade



Killed in Action
TERUEL SPAIN
20 January 1938

A cause like ours
is greater than
defeat can know



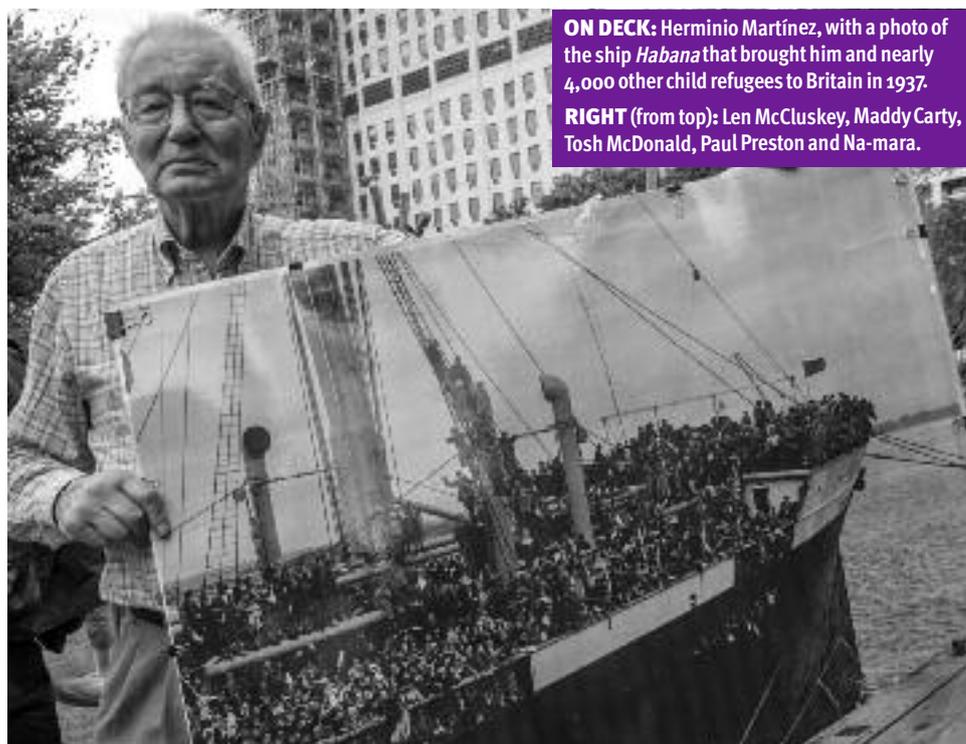
At the annual IBMT



PICTURED (clockwise from top left): Wreaths and flowers at the memorial; cyclists from the National Clarion Cycling Club 1895 setting off for Newhaven and onward to Barcelona to remember Clarion Cycling Club members who fought in Spain, including four who gave their lives; Meirian Jump, manager of the Marx Memorial Library and grand-daughter of International Brigader James Jump, laying a wreath; Na-mara playing to the gathering.

Photos, including those on facing page: Andrew Wiard

commemoration on London's Southbank



ON DECK: Herminio Martínez, with a photo of the ship *Habana* that brought him and nearly 4,000 other child refugees to Britain in 1937.
RIGHT (from top): Len McCluskey, Maddy Carty, Tosh McDonald, Paul Preston and Na-mara.

Tales of exile and inspiration

Hundreds gathered at the International Brigade memorial on London's Southbank on Saturday 1 July to remember the 2,500 volunteers from Britain and Ireland who fought fascism in the Spanish Civil War – including the 526 who died in Spain.

They heard speeches from Len McCluskey, General Secretary of Unite, and Tosh MacDonald, President of the train drivers' union ASLEF, who both praised the inspirational example of internationalism and solidarity set 80 years ago by the International Brigades.

A moving contribution came from another guest speaker, Herminio Martínez. Aged seven at the time, he was one of the nearly 4,000 child refugees who arrived in Southampton 80 years ago on 23 May 1937 to escape the terror bombing of Spain's Basque Country by Hitler and Mussolini, Franco's allies in the Spanish Civil War.

Herminio noted that the British government at first refused to give sanctuary to the children, and only consented to do so following a public outcry in reaction to the destruction of Guernica on 26 April 1937. The government insisted that no public funds would be spent on the upkeep of the *niños vascos* (Basque children), as they were called.

Most of the children who arrived in England on board the *Habana* were eventually reunited with their parents, whether in Spain or in exile. But for Herminio and some 400 others Britain became their home.

'I want to express our deepest thanks and gratitude to the British people,' he said. 'They were wonderful in the support they gave us. Some people gave years of their lives to support and look after us.'

Introducing Herminio, Spanish Civil War historian Paul Preston – who is the IBMT's Founding Chair – praised the British sea captains and crews who defied the blockade of Bilbao that had been entrusted to the

Royal Navy by the international non-intervention treaty.

He contrasted their behaviour, and that of George Steer, the reporter who broke the story of the bombing of Guernica to the world, with the pusillanimous attitude of the British government towards the fascist dictators.

Music at the commemoration was provided by Maddy Carty and Na-mara, who led the singing of 'Valley of Jarama', often called the 'Song of the British Battalion'.

Unite's Len McCluskey singled out two volunteers who went to Spain from the T&G, a forerunner of Unite, as examples for the labour movement today.

Jack Jones, former General Secretary of the T&G, was 'a personal fiend of mine and a hero of mine'. Wounded at the Ebro, he came home to fight for working people. 'He never forgot those formative experiences in Spain, working to keep the spirit of the International Brigades alive and their example fresh for a new generation.'

The Unite leader added: 'Bill Briskey, an East London bus driver who was killed at Jarama, said before the battle: "At least if the fascists get me they will not get my union card" – he'd left it with his T&G branch secretary.'

Len continued: 'Our movement is stronger today not because it has the occasional extraordinary individual like Jack Jones, but because it has thousands of Bill Briskeys, who will do whatever it takes for democracy and justice and who are the backbone of our movement.'

For ASLEF, Tosh McDonald expressed the view that, just as the Spanish Civil War had been the great cause of young people in the 1930s, or that the anti-apartheid struggle had been the great cause of his generation, the plight of the Palestinian people was the equivalent for many young people today. His remarks were warmly applauded, but prompted a walk-out by the representative of the Association of Jewish Ex-Servicemen & Women in protest at the criticism of Israel. ▲

For the IBMT statement on the reaction to Tosh McDonald's speech, see the News & Blog page of the IBMT website: www.international-brigades.org.uk. A video of Len McCluskey's speech can be found on the IBMT YouTube page: www.youtube.com/user/IBMTnews.





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Cover picture

Among those attending the unveiling on 10 June of the

new memorial in Oxford (see page 9) was David Carr, pictured here holding a photo of his uncle George Turnill, of Worksop, Nottinghamshire, who was killed in the Battle of Teruel in January 1938, aged 25. The banner was made specially for a memorial meeting for Turnill in Worksop in February 1938 and, according to David, has not been publicly displayed until the event in Oxford.

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ON STAGE: School students (right) aged 15-18 from the Archbishop Sentamu Academy in Hull have performed 'Ocho', a new play about the eight International Brigade volunteers from Hull.

Written by award-winning playwright Jane Thornton and featuring music by Dave Rotheray, lead guitarist for The Beautiful South (both pictured above), 'Ocho' – which means eight in Spanish – was staged at venues in Beverley, Goole, Hull and Barcelona in June and July.



NEW PLAQUE: A memorial (left) to the International Brigade volunteers from Renfrewshire was unveiled on 13 May. Located outside Renfrewshire Council's offices in Paisley, it was raised with help from Paisley & District Trades Union Council, Renfrewshire Council and others.

TOGETHER AGAIN: There were eight *niños vascos* (right) at the annual reunion of the 'Basque children' who arrived in Britain as refugees 80 years ago in May 1937. They met for lunch at London's Meliá White House Hotel on 28 May. Nearly 4,000 were on the *Habana* when it sailed from Bilbao to Southampton to escape Franco's offensive and terror bombing campaign against the Spanish Republic's northern enclave. Most were eventually reunited with their parents in Spain or abroad, while others settled in Britain.





BANNERS BRIGHT: As part of the programme of events for the 'Banners from Spain' exhibition (above), which ran at Islington Museum in London from 5 May to 8 July, a special 'Islington Banner for Spain' was made by a volunteer workshop run by renowned banner-maker Ed Hall. Pictured below are some of the banner-makers at its unveiling on 19 June. The banner was displayed at the IBMT's commemoration on London's Southbank on 1 July, with workshop members vowing to bring it to the event every year.

The exhibition showcased six newly restored banners from the archives of the Marx Memorial Library (MML), which had been made for Hammersmith Communist Party during the Spanish Civil War.

A 24-page booklet, 'Islington and the Spanish Civil War', was published by Islington Museum and the MML for the exhibition. Written by Roz Currie, Susan Hahn and Meirian Jump, a limited number of copies are available on request from the IBMT (with a stamped addressed A5 envelope).



ALL SMILES: David Heywood (left) and Neil Gore in the Marx Memorial Library's memorial garden, next to the plaque naming the British Battalion dead at the Battle of the Ebro.

What a ride it's been!

The IBMT said thank you and farewell to Townsend Productions following the success of 'Dare Devil Rides to Jarama', their play centred on the life of speedway superstar and International Brigade volunteer Clem Beckett.

The last scheduled performances ended in May – eight months after the play, which was commissioned by the IBMT, began touring venues around the UK.

In fact the final two performances came at the Tolpuddle Martyrs' Festival in Dorset in July, where it was staged in the GMB union's marquee on two consecutive nights.

'Dare Devil Rides to Jarama' won praise from audiences and critics alike, with the *Morning Star* reviewer declaring it was 'quite simply the best political theatre produced for a long, long time'.

The IBMT has formally thanked Neil Gore, scriptwriter and actor, fellow actor David Heywood and Louise Townsend of Townsend Productions.

Townsend Productions next turn their attention to the famous Grunwick strike of the 1970s. Their new play, 'We Are The Lions Mr Manager', begins touring in October this year.



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

Welsh at war

WELSHMEN AT BRUNETE: Pictured in August 1937, back row from left: Alwyn Skinner (killed at the Ebro, 1938), Fred Morris, Ben Davies, CE Palmer; middle row from left: Archie Cook, Hector Manning, Harry Dobson (killed at the Ebro, 1938), Arthur Williams; front row from left: Jack Roberts, Ted Edwards, Morris Davies.



As the IBMT prepares to hold its 2017 Annual General Meeting and Commemoration Weekend in Cardiff on 13-15 October, **GRAHAM DAVIES**, author of a new book on Wales and the Spanish Civil War, surveys the involvement of Welsh volunteers in the conflict – from early Franco supporters and fighters in Republican militias through to how the International Brigaders were regarded on their return home.

My engagement with the theme of the Welsh in the Spanish Civil War began a few years ago following a mesmerising assault on the senses from the masterpiece by Pablo Picasso – his ‘Guernica’ – after a visit to the Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía in Madrid, Spain’s national museum of 20th century art. Not long after, I discovered in the corridor of the Burry Port Institute in Carmarthenshire a plaque commemorating those men from South Wales who were killed in Spain fighting against fascism.

This engagement has now produced my book targeted at the general reader on the Welsh volunteers – ‘You are Legend’, published by Welsh Academic Press.

The classic descriptions of the Welsh in Spain were written by Hywel Francis in 1984¹ and Rob Stradling in 2004². Both are rigorously researched by competent historians: the former reflects the first-hand knowledge of the volunteers extrapolated from extensive personal interviews; the latter has the advantage of further reflection and access to the Russian archives on the International Brigades.

The Welsh involvement in the Spanish Civil War began a little earlier than some realise. As the last dramatic acts of the death of the Spanish Republic unfolded with the murders of Castillo and Sotelo and the cryptic telegram from General Mola which signalled the uprising in Morocco, another piece of the jigsaw was emerging.

At 07.15 on the morning of 1 July 1936, Captain Cecil Bebb, a commercial pilot, took off from Croydon Airport, London, in a Dragon Rapide aircraft, bound for the Canary Islands. His mission was to make contact with General Franco and fly him to Tetuán in Spanish Morocco, where he would meet up with Spain’s Army of Africa.

Bebb was from Church Village, near Pontypridd, in Wales, and so it seems the first action of a Welshman in the Spanish conflict was to facilitate Franco’s role. To what extent MI6 was complicit in this secret journey is a continuing matter of conjecture. It has been alleged that Franco was accompanied by one of their agents, Major Hugh Pollard, with two other women and that the plot was planned over lunch at Simpson’s in the Strand³.

Ironically, there is another story to tell about the first Welsh volunteer to engage in battle in the Spanish Civil War. Frank Thomas was born in Pontypridd and brought up in Cardiff. Bored with life as a travelling salesman he admits he was attracted to Spain in a thirst for adventure and glory. Politically right-wing and strongly anti-communist, he writes that he was touched by the sacredness of General Franco’s cause and joined El Tercio, the Spanish Foreign Legion, linking up with them in October 1936 before the attack on Madrid.

There would not have been many of Thomas’s countrymen who would have appreciated his presence in Madrid’s Casa de Campo, the Parque del Oeste or the University City, throwing bombs at the members of the International Brigades who were bravely defending the city. They would not have been impressed to hear that his company at the Battle of Jarama had taken the village of San Martín de la Vega, a stone’s throw from the British at Morata de Tajuña.

Nor would the Welsh in the Battle of Brunete have enjoyed knowing that at Villanueva de Cañada Frank Thomas had been strengthening the barbed wire defences before their attack. Thomas was a Welsh volunteer for the Francoist cause who, by his own admission, deserted and returned home

with O’Duffy’s Irish Brigade. His ideology had little to commend it then and has even less currency today⁴.

Before the International Brigades had been set up there were already hundreds of volunteers from outside Spain who had attached themselves to various militias. James Albrighton was a young student from Salisbury who enrolled in the Republican Army on 2 October 1936. He wrote a diary (of which I obtained a personal copy) of those early experiences and mentions a Welshman named Sydney Lloyd Jones, who joined a couple of days later.

They became part of the Spanish MM (Muerte es Maestro) Centuria who were involved in ‘special duties’, which included searching out and executing the fascist spies of Madrid. They fought in the attempt to stem the Nationalist advance from Toledo to Madrid at San Martín de Valdeiglesias and Navalcanero.

According to Albrighton, Sydney Lloyd Jones died on 14 October in actions against the Moors and the Spanish Foreign Legion at Chapinería, about

“Sydney Lloyd Jones, about whom nothing else seems to be known, was the first Welshman to die in combat against fascism in Spain. He was buried with his comrades in a ditch that ran through the grove where they were fighting.”

30 miles west of Madrid. He describes how three of the men, Sidney Lloyd Jones among them, were killed while repulsing a fascist attack on their flanks. He writes: ‘Their bravery and courage in continuing their fighting, despite all being wounded was not in vain – it gave the new Centuria time to reach us.’

Sydney Lloyd Jones, about whom nothing else seems to be known, was the first Welshman to die in combat against fascism in Spain. He was buried with his comrades in a ditch that ran through the grove where they were fighting.

Of the other early arrivals we know that at least Will Lloyd and Bob Condon of Aberaman and Pat Murphy of Cardiff had linked up with a battalion of French volunteers and were in a unit that was sent on Christmas Day by train to the Córdoba front and in January to Las Rozas.

However, it was not until December of 1936 that the group began to expand. Indeed, when the newly formed British Battalion went into action at the Battle of Jarama it was likely that there were about 30 Welsh volunteers among the 600 British. Other Welsh volunteers failed to get into service in Spain for a number of reasons, including being captured or failing a medical.

Also among these early arrivals were David Joseph Jones of Llwynypia, WJ Davies, John Williams and Sam Morris of Ammanford, Bill Coles and Jack Taylor of Cardiff, Tom Davies of Bedlinog, Michael O’Donoghue

Continued overleaf

THE WELSH IN THE SPANISH CIVIL WAR

From previous page

of Merthyr Vale and William Foulkes of Treorchy.

I have listed almost 200 'Welsh' volunteers who served in Spain in the appendix of my book. They are men and women who served on the Republican side in Spain, for whom I found a recognisable footprint and who were either born in Wales or had strong Welsh connections.

About 70 per cent of these were members of the Communist Party and over half of the total were miners. My estimate is that 35 of these died, two more than the number usually cited. Despite the view expressed by some that it was allegiance to the Communist Party as opposed to Republican Spain that motivated most of the volunteers, the strong anti-fascist motives of the Welsh volunteers were echoed by the comments of socialist leaders and politicians, and replicated in the debates and discussions of political groupings in the UK.

For example, in a local council meeting in Llanelli on 10 September 1936 Councillor Brinley Jones argued that the victory of Italy and Germany in Spain would mean the downfall of the British Empire and the end of a democratic chamber in Llanelli.

The views of the Welsh volunteers followed a common pattern. Typically, Jim Brewer was convinced of the need to fight fascism as part of an international movement. Outraged by Hitler's military intervention in Spain, for him silence meant acquiescence. Morien Morgan had interrupted the last year of his honours degree at university to volunteer for Spain. A radical and intelligent thinker, he was appalled that Mussolini's actions went unchallenged, amazed at military might when he was visiting the Rhine and felt helpless at growing German military expansion.

Another volunteer, Will Paynter, went to Spain initially as the Communist Party organiser for Wales in order to look after the British Battalion's interests at the International Brigade headquarters. He regarded himself as part of a battle, not merely to defend a people from a savage aggressor, but to destroy something that could eventually crush the people of all democratic countries.

What then was the legacy of the Welsh volunteers? Certainly the Comintern regarded the Brigades as a highly disciplined force that played a huge part in resisting fascist aggression, and their contribution was possibly decisive in some battles for the survival of the Republic. They were seen as the embodiment of international and proletarian solidarity and future revolutionary warriors, as well as potential Soviet spies. For many their sacrifice 'stands as an eternal rebuke to those in power in Western bourgeois democracies whose preference for collaborating with fascism in the 1930s rather than confronting it made inevitable the horrors of the Second World War...'⁵.

British Battalion commander Bill Alexander argued that the volunteers understood that fascism led to war, and the three-year resistance gave time for people everywhere to learn lessons and prepare for their own struggle against fascism. He believed that the lessons to be learned were that fascism must be exposed and that it could only be defeated by struggle and that ordinary people had the potential to be realised in a truly free and democratic society⁶.

It is true that compared with the Irish contingent of volunteers the Welsh did not develop a strong corporate identity, although they tended to find their place together in No.1 Company. Yet Will Paynter was also keen that there should be no separation by nationalities, only close cohesion and better relationships with Spanish comrades.

The Welsh did not get much of a mention in the XVth Brigade's newspaper *The Volunteer for Liberty*, nor did they feature much in 'The Book of the XV Brigade', which was written by lots of different volunteers and edited by Irishman Frank Ryan. Yet there were Welshmen who were company commanders, political commissars and who had attended officers' training schools, and certainly their largely militant coalfield background, digging experience and singing ability left their mark.

Fred Copeman specifically mentions that on the way to Brunete the lift given to the multinational group by the singing of the Welsh miners', and



Jim Brewer (left) and Will Paynter's application to join the Spanish Communist Party.

Miles Tomalin composed a limerick about the confusion caused by similar Welsh names:

*There was a young fellow named Price,
And another fellow named Price.
And a fellow named Roberts,
And another fellow named Roberts.
And another young fellow named Price.*

Hywel Francis points out that the special regard, even reverence, in which Welsh International Brigaders were held is illustrated by both the numerous memorial meetings and the kind of welcomes organised in their communities for those who returned. He states: 'They were in the same tradition as the Chartists at Newport and were to be celebrated in spite of their respective defeats, because they were all men before their time.'⁸

However, it is ironic that while the Welsh Dean of Chichester declared that the Brigaders had given their lives for something of eternal value and that God would not forget such sacrifices, Pope Pius XII had sent a telegram to Franco at the end of the war giving thanks to God for the long-desired Catholic victory in Spain.

For Alun Menai Williams he had been part of a 'truly international force of volunteers spurred on to action by the heartfelt cries of "No Pasarán" of a beleaguered nation and its people'⁹. They fought for an ideal but lost out to superior force.

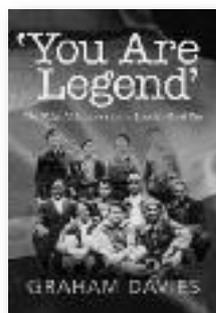
In 2009 Carles Casajuana, Spanish ambassador in London, told the group of veterans receiving Spanish citizenship: 'Your efforts were not in vain. Your ideals are part of the foundations of our democracy in Spain today.'¹⁰

There is no more fitting tribute to the Welshmen of the International Brigades, as well as to all others, than the memorable words from the speech of La Pasionaria, from which the title of my book derives: 'You are history. You are legend. You are the heroic example of democracy's solidarity and universality... we shall not forget you; and, when the olive tree of peace is in flower, entwined with the victory laurels of the Republic of Spain—come back.' ▲

¹Francis, Hywel, 'Miners against Fascism' (London: Lawrence & Wishart, 2012). ²Stradling, Robert, 'Wales and the Spanish Civil War' (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2004). ³For the story told by journalist Peter Day, see 'Franco's Friends' (London: Biteback Publishing, 2011).

⁴See Robert Stradling, 'Brother Against Brother' (Stroud: Sutton Publishing, 1998). ⁵*Morning Star*, 18 February 2004. ⁶Alexander, Bill, 'British Volunteers for Liberty' (London: Lawrence & Wishart, 1982) p259.

⁷Copeman, Fred, 'Reason in Revolt' (London: Blandford Press, 1948) p123. ⁸Op.cit., p258. ⁹Williams, Alun Menai, 'From the Rhondda to the Ebro' (Pontypool: Warren & Pell, 2004) p180. ¹⁰Baxell, Jackson and Jump, 'Antifascistas' (London: Lawrence & Wishart, 2010) p103.



'You Are Legend: The Welsh Volunteers in the Spanish Civil War' by Graham Davies is published in October 2017 in Cardiff by Welsh Academic Press (£19.99).

UNVEILING OF OXFORD MEMORIAL



Carman Negrín (left), grand-daughter of Spanish Republican Prime Minister Juan Negrín, beside the memorial to the 31 International Brigade volunteers from Oxfordshire.



The names of the six who died in the Spanish Civil War are inscribed on one side of the memorial, which was unveiled in Oxford on 10 June. Sculptor Charlie Carter used the clenched fist and scorpion motif to accompany the names after seeing it on a cap-badge worn by International Brigaders and others during the war.

A large crowd of supporters (above) heard speeches from Carmen Negrín and, among others, Colin Carriff of the Oxford International Brigade Memorial Committee, IBMT Chair Richard Baxell and Oxford Deputy Lord Mayor Christine Simm. (See also 'Secretarial notes' on page 11.)

¡Salud! Toast the memory of the International Brigades with a can of Brigadista Special Edition Golden Ale

Brigadista Special Edition Golden Ale is brewed, sold and distributed by Three Sods Brewery in association with the **International Brigade Memorial Trust**.

Located in Bethnal Green in the heart of London's East End – home of many International Brigaders – the brewery has crafted a **full flavoured classic golden ale**, rich in barley and hops and with an ABV of 4.1%.

Sales of Brigadista Special Edition Golden Ale, which has been created in partnership with **Hope Not Hate**, help fund the commemorative and educational work of the International Brigade Memorial Trust.

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To place an order or for more information go to www.brigadistaale.co.uk or phone 07393 489 103.





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



SWASTIKA: Insignia (left) of the Blue Division, which comprised 50,000 troops sent by Franco to fight alongside German and other Axis forces on the Eastern Front during the Second World War; and (right) the sign for the square in Alicante that commemorates them. See 'Historical revisionism is not just a problem in Eastern Europe'.

Why we're increasing membership subs and scrapping the concessionary rate

The IBMT is planning to increase membership subscription rates from 1 January next year, with a flat-rate £5 addition to annual rates. This will make the individual rate £25. The household membership category – for up to four people at one address – will rise to £30.

The concessionary category for the unwaged, standing at present at £12.50 a year, would be scrapped under these plans.

Subscription rates haven't been raised for five years, and this is only the second time they have been adjusted since the IBMT was established in 2001. Since then the range and quality of our activities have expanded considerably.

In the past couple of years, for example, we have launched the new *IBMT eNewsletter*, commissioned the acclaimed play 'Dare Devil Rides to Jarama' and moved into our own badly-needed rented office space in central London.

We are all aware that many people are feeling the effects of wage freezes and austerity, so the decision to set the new rates, which was taken in

On the subject of the *IBMT Magazine*, the Executive Committee also agreed that from next year the printed magazine should only be available to IBMT members. Currently we produce many more copies than there are members and distribute the surplus at meetings and events. However, the feeling among Trustees was that the magazine should revert to being an exclusive benefit of – and incentive for – IBMT membership.

It's essential that our work continues. The story of the men and women who went to Spain is still not properly known or understood. Their example of international solidarity and anti-fascism must be passed on to future generations. With everyone's loyal support we can help make sure this happens.

Historical revisionism is not just a problem in Eastern Europe

Here's an extract from the June 2017 issue of *FIR News*, newsletter of the Vienna-based *International Federation of Resistance Fighters* (www.fir.at), which keeps alive the memory of the partisans and other anti-Nazi and anti-fascist fighters during the Second World War.

I don't think I'll be alone in finding the content of the report disturbing. Apart from anything else it underlines how important it is for the IBMT and our sister organisations in Spain and around the world to continue to tell the story of the International Brigades and their anti-fascist fight in Spain.

The subject of 'historical revisionism' you can find mostly in Central and Eastern European countries, in the Baltic States, Poland, Ukraine and former Yugoslavia. Sometimes one can forget, for example, that there are also politically influential forces in Italy and Spain which are familiar with the ideas of Mussolini and Franco and commemorate them publicly.

This was made clear a few weeks ago in the

Subscription increases are necessary just to keep pace with our expenditure.

June by the IBMT Executive Committee, was not an easy one.

However, the IBMT's running costs and financial commitments are growing and subscription increases are necessary just to keep pace with our expenditure.

Scrapping the concessionary category was an especially difficult decision. But, at £12.50 a year, the current rate doesn't even cover the cost of producing and sending out our magazine three times a year. And any moderately higher sum would still barely cover the IBMT's overall running costs when shared out among our members.

Spanish city of Alicante in a dispute about the renaming of public places by the ruling PP (Partido Popular / People's Party), which emerged from the former Francoist political party.

A local court has overturned a decision by the previous socialist-led city council to rename the Plaza de la División Azul (Blue Division Square) to Plaza de la Igualdad (Equality Square).

The PP can now change the name back to Plaza de la División Azul in memory of the Spaniards who fought on the fascist side against the Soviet Union during the Second World War. In addition, some 50 other street names linked to Spain's former fascist regime will be restored, replacing streets names after, among others, Carmen de Burgos, Rosa Luxemburg and Clara Zetkin.

The city council invited Spanish Prime Minister Mariano Rajoy, also of the PP, to attend the renaming ceremony – but he did not take part.

This process is symptomatic of a political tendency in Spain among reactionary forces, and not just open fascists, not only to block Republican memory of the Spanish Civil War, but also to rehabilitate the fascist perpetrators.

In the context of European remembrance policy, it is necessary to counter such tendencies as a whole. Anyone who rightly protests against SS veterans' meetings in Latvia should also keep an eye on Spain.

Congratulations to the Oxford activists

After four years of campaigning and fundraising our magnificent new memorial in Oxford (see page 9) has finally been unveiled.

Thanks must go to the small group of dedicated supporters in and around Oxford who have worked tirelessly to erect a monument to the 31 men and women from Oxfordshire who went to Spain. The names of the six who died are inscribed on Charlie Carter's sculpture.

The Oxfordshire International Brigade Memorial Committee faced considerable difficulties in finding a suitable location and were twice forced to change the proposed site in the face of local objections. They also had to raise more than £20,000, which they did by producing a superb book – 'No Other Way: Oxfordshire and the Spanish Civil War 1936-39' by Chris Farman, Valerie Rose and Liz Woolley – by organising concerts and raffles and by good old-fashioned tin-rattling.

Already the memorial is a landmark for the labour movement in Oxford. On 1 July the local NHS campaign group chose it as a rallying point for a march to the city centre, where the speakers included film director Ken Loach.

Jim Jump

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

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

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Membership application form

Full name

Up to three additional names (for household membership)*

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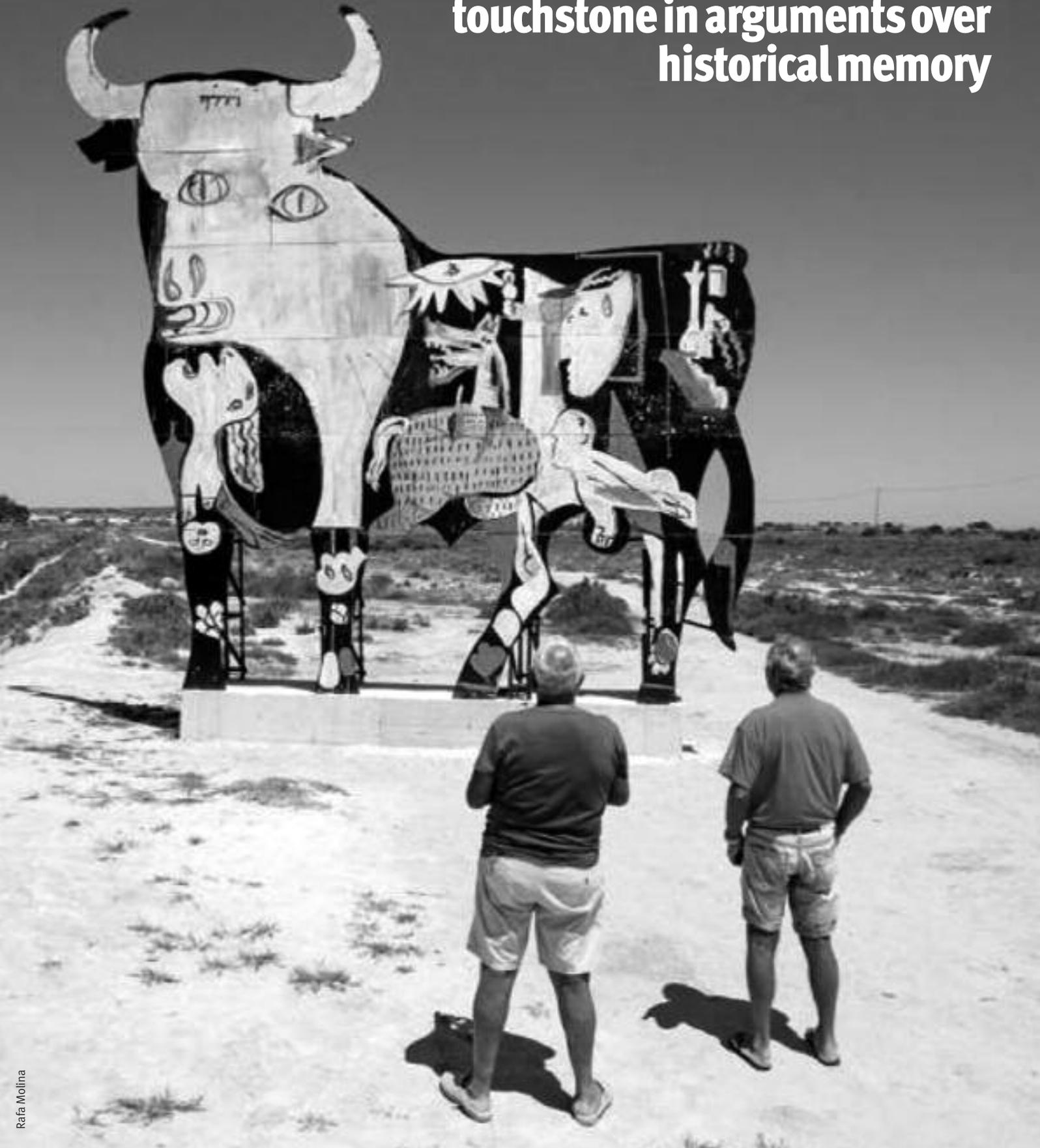
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BELOW: Images from Picasso's 'Guernica' were painted over one of Spain's emblematic roadside hoardings advertising Osborne drinks in May this year. This *Toro de Osborne* stands outside the town of Santa Pola, in Alicante province, and the painting is the work of Murcia-based artist Sam3.

Can Spain face

Fate of Franco's controversial mausoleum emerges as touchstone in arguments over historical memory



up to its troubled past?

By María Domínguez

In April 1940, just one year after Franco's triumph in the Spanish Civil War, his government announced the building of a monument and mausoleum to bury and commemorate those who died in the war. The Valley of the Fallen (Valle de los Caídos) would be set in the mountains of Guadarrama, near Madrid. Franco said it would become 'a national act of atonement' and reconciliation.

At first, workers were hired for the construction of the monument and basilica. However, soon it was obvious that there was a lack of resources to finish the work on time. So Franco decided to send Republican political prisoners to the site as forced labour.

On 30 May 1958 the Spanish press reported government plans to transfer the remains of many of those who died during the civil war to the Valley of the Fallen, whether from the Nationalist or Republican side. The only condition was that they must have been Spanish and Catholic – which is why there are no International Brigaders in the sanctuary. Nor are there any of Franco's Moroccan soldiers, who were buried in Catalonia in the Muslim cemeteries of Prades and Manresa.

In 1959 Franco inaugurated the Valley of the Fallen, and after his death on 20 November 1975 he was buried inside the basilica, where he remains to this day, beside the remains of the founder of Spain's fascist party, the Falange, José Antonio Primo de Rivera.

More than 30,000 others are also buried there, from both sides of the civil war, along with many of the political prisoners who worked at the site. These were transferred or buried there without the consent of their relatives. Indeed, for the families of the Republican dead it was done mostly against their will.

Nowadays the Valley of the Fallen is the responsibility of Spain's National Heritage (Patrimonio Nacional) state agency, with annual maintenance costs of 750,000 euros. In the eyes of many, as long as the body of Francisco Franco is buried there, the government is maintaining and honouring a memorial to a dictator.

The decision to bury Franco at the Valley of the Fallen was made by King Juan Carlos I and the government of the time. His remains were

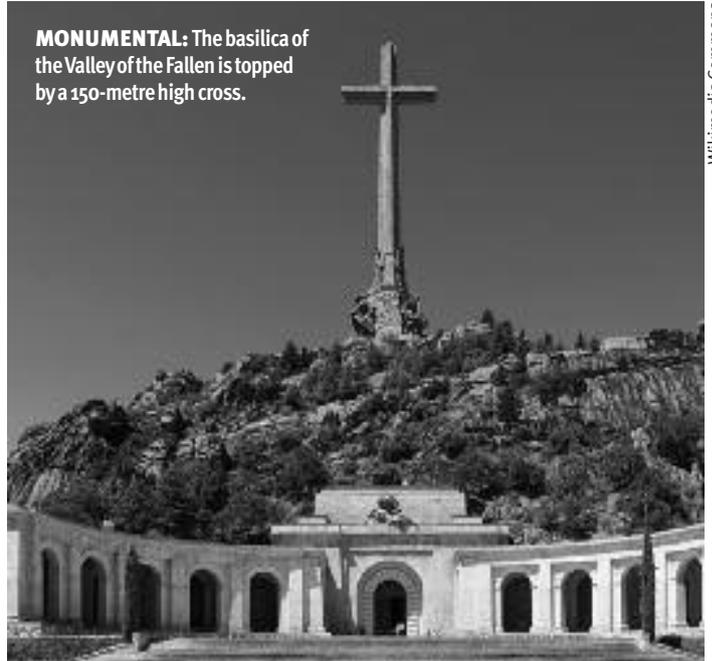
Francisco Franco was buried inside the basilica, where he remains to this day, beside the remains of the founder of Spain's fascist party, the Falange, José Antonio Primo de Rivera.

thus handed over to the protection of the Benedictine order who run the site. But the state cannot unilaterally exhume Franco from this resting place, since the site belongs to the Catholic Church. Strictly speaking, only the Church and the family of the deceased dictator can remove his remains. This is set out in article 16 of the 2007 Law of Historical Memory.

However, the government could call on the Benedictines to open negotiations, including with the relatives of Franco, on allowing the exhumation to take place.

On 11 May this year the Spanish parliament (Congreso de los Diputados) approved a non-legislative proposal presented by the

MONUMENTAL: The basilica of the Valley of the Fallen is topped by a 150-metre high cross.



Wikimedia Commons

PSOE socialist party calling both for the removal of Franco's remains from the Valley of the Fallen and for the 'revitalising' of the Law of Historical Memory. This would include the recommendations made by a group of United Nations experts in 2011, who were sharply critical of the way that the victims of Franco and their families had been treated by the Spanish state.

The motion was passed with 198 votes in favour, one against (cast 'by mistake' by a deputy of the right-wing Popular Party) and 140 abstentions by the PP and Esquerra Republicana de Catalunya. However, the resolution is non-binding, and therefore sets no date for its implementation. Moreover, the government has no obligation to take action on it.

There are 16 measures being proposed in the PSOE plan approved by the parliament. They include:

- Redefining the Valley of the Fallen, so that it can no longer be a place in memory of Franco, and instead reconverting it into a space for reconciliation, democratic collective memory and the honouring of the victims of the civil war and the dictatorship.
- A comprehensive survey and census of the infrastructure and works carried out with forced labour at the Valley of the Fallen.
- The removal of any type of subsidy or public aid to any organisation or entity that extols or defends the dictatorship or the figure of the dictator Franco.
- The creation of a Truth Commission, in line with the recent recommendations of the United Nations.
- Reopening and strengthening of the Office of Assistance to Victims of the Civil War and Dictatorship.

What is the current government's position? The spokesperson for the PP government, Íñigo Méndez de Vigo, has stated: '[This] is an old debate. The government is in favour of complying with the law, not allowing acts of propaganda and maintaining that place [the Valley of the Fallen] as a place of worship, without reopening old wounds of the civil war.' ▲

María Domínguez lives in Madrid, where she works as a public affairs consultant.

MARCHING: Encarnación Hernández Luna in the Spanish Republican army



The women who fought and campaigned for Spain

A new book published in Germany aims to give recognition to the many women, both Spanish and foreign, who championed the cause of the Spanish Republic during the Spanish Civil War. Many continued the anti-fascist fight in the Second World War, as authors **INGRID SCHIBOROWSKI** and **ANITA KOCHNOWSKI** describe here.

Our father Adolf Preissler fought in the International Brigades in Spain. Spain was a constant presence in our parents' home and has stayed with us throughout our lives.

We became members of the German KFSR (Association of Fighters and Friends of the Spanish Republic), convinced that those historical events and the progressive people who committed their lives to anti-fascism, solidarity, internationalism, peace and freedom in Spain must not be forgotten.



The war in Spain was not just a male affair, but in many areas women were equally prominent. This is why we believe that writing a book in recognition of the women from Spain and elsewhere who were active in the global movement of solidarity for the Spanish Republic is so important.

We have chosen the biographical

format, and the result is 'Frauen und der Spanische Krieg 1936-1939' ('Women and the Spanish War 1936-1939'), which runs to some 500 pages.*

Today we know that the war in Spain was the first battle of the Second World War. The *voluntarios de la libertad*, the volunteers for liberty, came to Spain from over 50 countries to defend the Republic against the fascists. Today, in many of their homelands, there are organisations or associations that maintain close contacts with each other. We received much international support from them in our research.

The number of publications on women in the war in Spain has been increasing in recent years. We wanted to make a modest contribution to this growing interest.

Even before the establishment of the International Brigades in October 1936, foreign and Spanish women fought against the Francoists in the militias of the various political parties and trade unions. Some foreign women were already living as exiles in Spain, others came to the People's Olympiad, which was to take place in Barcelona in July 1936. Some followed their husbands to Spain. Often only their names remain.

Others we know more about. Many continued the anti-fascist fight in the Second World War.

We hope that from our brief biographies it can be seen that women played an important role in the creation and defence of a new and democratic Spain, and without their courage and dedication the resistance against Franco would not have been possible for so long.

Here are some examples of our biographies...

HEDWIG RAHMEL / ROBENS was born in 1896 in the German town of Rosslau. In Berlin she joined the Spartacus Group and the Communist Party. From 1933 she was active in the anti-Nazi resistance, then in 1935 escaped to the USSR.

With a group of fellow communists she set off in 1937 for Spain from Leningrad, via Helsinki, Stockholm, Copenhagen and Paris. In Albacete she became a nurse in a field hospital. She married International Brigader Christian Robens and in 1939 they left Spain together with her friend Lisa Ost, who had also worked as a nurse in Spain.

Hedwig, along with Christian and Lisa, joined the French resistance, in the group Bir Hakeim, which operated in the Cévennes. She served as a messenger between different groups and looked after the wounded. Christian was arrested and executed in May 1944.

Hedwig and Lisa were arrested by the French police in 1944 and handed over to the Gestapo. Both were severely tortured and on 26 June they were executed. Their remains and those of 80 others were thrown into a mine-shaft near Puit de Célas.

Local people later organised a funeral at the cemetery of Alès. Their gravestones said: 'German partisans, died for freedom, murdered by the Gestapo. They belonged to the group of Germans who proved that not all Germans are Nazis.'

GERDA GREPP was born in Norway in 1907. During the Spanish Civil War she was a correspondent for the Workers' Party newspaper *Arbeiderbladet*. She reported from Barcelona in October 1936, and witnessed the bombing of Madrid later that year, when she accompanied German International Brigader Ludwig Renn to the Toledo front. She also worked as a translator. In common with other Norwegian journalists such as Nordahl Grieg and Nini Gleditsch, she felt a strong sympathy towards the Spanish Republic.

Gleditsch and Grepp helped organise shipments of aid from the Norwegian labour movement. In January and February 1937 they visited Málaga together with Arthur Koestler, who was working as a reporter for the *News Chronicle*. During the Battle of Málaga they managed to escape, whereas Koestler stayed in the city and was arrested. In May 1937 Gerda spent some weeks in the Basque Country.

While in Spain, she began suffering from tuberculosis and was forced to return to Norway. She died on 29 August 1940, only 33 years of age.

KATI DEUTSCH / HORNA was born in Budapest in 1912. She was a childhood friend of Robert Capa, who was also born in Hungary. Politically she felt close to the anarchists. With her first husband Paul Partos, she was forced to leave Hungary for Paris, as they had taken part in the resistance against the Horthy regime.

During the Spanish War she worked in the foreign department of the CNT-FAI anarchist federation as a photographer and later for various anarchist newspapers. Her most important works were published in the magazine *Mujeres Libres*. In 1939 she and her second husband, José Horna, emigrated to Mexico, where she died in October 2000.

ADA GROSSI was born in 1917 in Naples. Her father, Carmine Grossi, was a famous defence lawyer as well as a wealthy landowner and committed socialist. Her mother, Maria Olandese, was an opera singer.

In 1926 the family went into exile to Buenos Aires, where Ada studied singing and music. In August 1936 the family left Argentina for Barcelona. Brothers Renato and Aurelio Grossi fought at the front. Her mother cared for the wounded in a hospital and organised concerts for Republican soldiers. Ada and her father worked for Freedom Radio in Valencia and

Continued overleaf



CLOCKWISE (from top): Gerda Grepp in Spain; Kati Horna; memorial plaque in Berlin for Hedwig Rahmel; Lore Krüger; Georgette Kokocziński; Neus Catalá Pallejá as a prisoner of the Nazis; Ada Grossi; Katharine Marjory Ramsay (Duchess of Atholl).



Photos courtesy of authors



From previous page

Barcelona, which Carmine had founded. Ada read nightly broadcasts in Italian.

With the fascist victory, the family managed to cross the border into France. Ada and her mother were interned in the camps at Saône-et-Loire and Argelès-sur-Mer. In January 1941 Ada married Enrique Guzmán, a former Republican civil servant. The couple returned to Spain, but Enrique was arrested and sentenced to a long prison term by a military court. Ada was deported to Italy, where along with her father and mother she was arrested in Naples, interrogated and imprisoned. Ada died in 2015.

GEORGETTE KOKOCZINSKI, born in Versailles in 1908 and known as 'La Mimosa' (the affectionate one), joined a Paris theatre company in 1928, which performed at festivals organised by anarchists. She was also active in anarchist and anarcho-syndicalist groups.

In September 1936 she decided to go to Spain to fight on the side of the Republic. She worked as a nurse in the Durutti Column and with other women organised a frontline hospital in Aragón. She also fought as a *guerillera* in 'Los hijos de la noche' (children of the night) and other groups that operated behind enemy lines. On 17 October 1936, after a battle at Perdiguera, north east of Zaragoza, she was arrested along with the

“ We hope that from our brief biographies it can be seen that women played an important role in the creation and defence of a new and democratic Spain, and without their courage and dedication the resistance against Franco would not have been possible for so long.

German Augusta Marx and other female international fighters. They were tortured and then executed.

LORE HEINEMANN / KRÜGER was born in Magdeburg, Germany, in 1914. In 1933 she and her Jewish family had to flee from the Nazis. Her parents emigrated to Spain and she first travelled to Britain to work as a maid. In 1934 she joined her parents in Mallorca, then trained as a photographer in Barcelona and Paris, where she established links with the German Communist Party in exile.

In August 1936 Lore was with her parents in Mallorca, which had been captured by the fascists at the outset of the civil war. Republican troops landed on the island. But, suffering severe losses, they were soon forced to evacuate. More than 240 of them did not manage to reach their ships. The Francoists shot some of them on the spot; others were executed later.

Lore was able to photograph the bodies of the Republican soldiers at the military compound of Porto Cristo: 'I will never forget the smell of dead bodies, which filled this completely deserted place. The inhabitants had all left, the doors of the houses were still open. On the streets there were the dead bodies of young men. They were all burned. Franco's troops had poured gasoline on them and set them on fire.'

Back in Paris, she became active in the solidarity movement for Republican Spain. Then after the victory of the Francoists in the spring of 1939, her concern focused on the members of the International Brigades who were interned in France. One of them, the German communist Ernst Krüger, was later to become her husband.

After Hitler invaded France in 1940, she was interned as an enemy alien, but managed to escape. With a visa for Mexico, she arrived on a

freighter in New York in June 1941. She was once again interned. But thanks to Kurt Rosenfeld, a left-wing émigré lawyer, whom she knew from her Paris years, she was soon released.

With the help of the anti-fascist German American Emergency Committee (established by Rosenfeld), Lore helped found a newspaper, *The German American*, first published monthly and later daily. She worked for the newspaper as a translator, writer and photographer.

In December 1946 she returned to Germany, passing through Odessa and Moscow. She worked as a literary translator and freelance interpreter and died in Berlin in 2009.

KATHARINE 'KITTY' MARJORY RAMSAY was born in Edinburgh in 1874. On marrying John Stewart-Murray, who succeeded his father as the 8th Duke of Atholl, she became the Duchess of Atholl. In 1924 she was elected as the Conservative MP for Kinross and West Perthshire.

In 1937 she joined fellow MPs Ellen Wilkinson (Labour) and Eleanor Rathbone (Independent) on a visit to Republican Spain. She saw the effects of the fascist bombing of Valencia, Barcelona and Madrid, in particular the dire consequences for women and children.

On their return from Spain the trio, joined by Charlotte Haldane and JB Priestly, established the Dependents Aid Committee to help the families of International Brigaders. Kitty also chaired the National Joint Committee for Spanish Relief. Her book 'Searchlight on Spain' (1938) and opposition to Britain's policy of 'non-intervention' won her the nickname of the 'Red Duchess'.

In 1938, in protest at the government's policy of appeasement towards the fascist powers, she resigned her seat in Parliament and forced a by-election, which she narrowly lost as an independent candidate.

After 1945 she was an active member of the anti-Soviet British League for European Freedom. She died in 1960.

ENCARNACIÓN HERNÁNDEZ LUNA, born near Valencia on an unknown date, was a member of the 5th Regiment, in the 11th Division of the Spanish Republican Army, which was led by the legendary Enrique Lister.

She was the wife of the Cuban Alberto Sánchez Menéndez, who was killed at the Battle of Brunete. Pablo Neruda wrote a poem dedicated to the couple. In the Battle of the Ebro she fought so bravely that she was appointed brigade commander. In exile she lived in France and the Soviet Union, and died in Canada in 2004.

NEUS CATALÁ PALLEJÁ was born in 1915 in Tarragona province, the daughter of farm workers. After the fascist uprising in 1936 she moved to Barcelona, where she joined the Juventudes Socialistas Unificadas (United Young Socialists) and was a founding member of the Unified Socialist Party of Catalonia. In 1937 she began working as a nurse.

When Catalonia fell early in 1939 she was caring for 180 orphans in the Colonia Las Acacias in Premià de Dalt. She took the children over the border into France. Together with husband Albert Roger – who was arrested and killed in the Sachsenhausen concentration camp – she was active in the French resistance, delivering messages and transporting weapons and documents.

She too was arrested by the Nazis in 1943, and deported to the Ravensbrück concentration camp, where she was forced to work in weapons manufacture. Later she was transferred to Holleischen, which was part of the Flossenbürg concentration camp.

Liberated in 1945, she returned to France to continue the fight against Franco, this time with her new partner Félix Sancho. Neus became chair of the Amical Ravensbrück remembrance organisation and joined the Communist Party of Catalonia. In 2005 the Generalitat of Catalonia honoured her with the Cross of St George. She will be 102 on 6 October. ▲

*'Frauen und der Spanische Krieg 1936-1939: Eine biografische Dokumentation' by Ingrid Schiborowski (Berlin: Edition Ost, 2016) 30 euros.



Yiddish language Botwin Company newsletter (above) and a replica of the Jewish company's banner (right) being carried at a commemoration in Warsaw last year.



GERBEN ZAAGSMA writes about his new book exploring the engagement of Jewish volunteers in the International Brigades.

Fighting fascism and the passivity myth

In 2001 I studied Yiddish in London. During one of my courses entitled *Yiddish for Historians*, we were discussing the so-called *yizker bikher*, memorial books written after the Second World War that describe the history and ultimate destruction of local Jewish communities in Eastern Europe. A fellow student, who had studied the memorial book on Bełchatów in Poland, told us that it contained the story of a Jewish volunteer from that city who had left to fight in the International Brigades.

Soon afterwards I discovered that London University's SOAS library held copies of several Yiddish memoirs of Jewish volunteers. I decided to devote myself to studying this topic, in particular the Naftali Botwin Company, a Jewish unit founded on 12 December 1937 within the Polish Dombrowski Brigade on the instigation of Jewish communists in Paris, most of them migrants from Poland.

Researching the topic, two things struck me in most writings on the subject: the emphasis on the high number of Jewish-born volunteers in the International Brigades, and the way that the Holocaust is the main prism that is used to explain and evaluate their participation in the Spanish Civil War.

The struggle of the volunteers of Jewish descent is often presented as the first act of Jewish resistance against fascist antisemitism and, ultimately, against Hitler (Franco's ally in Spain) and the Nazi extermination policy that culminated in the Holocaust.

Much of what has been written about Jewish volunteers therefore places them within a larger Jewish resistance narrative that aims to counter the myth of Jewish passivity in the face of the Nazi onslaught.

The large proportion of Jewish volunteers is often interpreted as indicative of a specific Jewish motivation to fight in Spain. However, this mainly reflected the relatively large proportion of Jews active in the socialist and communist movements at the time.

I expanded my studies to answer two key questions. To what extent did Jewishness and Jewish concerns matter during the war in Spain? And why was a Jewish company founded in the International Brigades?

After several years of research the result is a book, *'Jewish Volunteers, the International Brigades and the Spanish Civil War'*, in which I explore the meaning of the participation of Jewish volunteers in Spain both during and after the conflict.

What does it actually mean to speak about 'Jewish volunteers'? As I

argue, this phrase is useful to denote descent but cannot be used to describe a specific category of volunteers who fought in Spain with a specific Jewish motivation or consciousness. For many Jewish volunteers, this was not the case and theirs was an ideological choice.

Why, though, was the Botwin Company formed? Given the important role that the Brigades played in the Comintern's propaganda for the Popular Front, propaganda was an important factor: a Jewish military unit facilitated support campaigns conducted by Jewish communists in Paris among Jewish migrants.

Yet there was another crucial reason for the company's formation: the existence of antisemitic stereotypes about 'Jewish cowardice' that had surfaced in the International Brigades as well as in the Polish migrant press in France. These stereotypes had a long history and were founded, among other things, on allegations of Jewish draft evasion.

The Botwin Company served to emancipate Jewish volunteers as worthy soldiers, equal to their Polish comrades in arms. Its formation was a way to propagate Jewish equality in battle, and thus about inclusion and emancipation.

It is impossible to speak of the experience of Jewish volunteers, during or after the Spanish Civil War, without addressing the two great myths that have loomed so large over their participation and legacy: that of Jewish cowardice, and that of Jewish passivity during the Holocaust.

Spain might not have been the place where a singular category of Jewish volunteers fought a battle against the future murderers of their people, as many contemporary observers would have it. But it was the place where they fought one of the classic antisemitic stereotypes of the 19th and 20th centuries: that of the Jew as a coward, of someone who will shy away from action.

In that sense, the experiences of Jewish volunteers, as recounted in my book, whether they were self-consciously Jewish or not, constitute one of the many chapters in the ongoing project of Jewish modernity as it unfolded from the late 18th century onwards. ▲

Gerben Zaagsma (<http://gerbenzaagsma.org>) is a senior research scientist at the Centre for Contemporary and Digital History at the University of Luxembourg. See overleaf for a review of *'Jewish Volunteers, the International Brigades and the Spanish Civil War'*.

Did they go as Jews or political activists?



'Jewish Volunteers, the International Brigades and the Spanish Civil War' by Gerben Zaagsma (London: Bloomsbury, 2017) £85.

Reviewed by Freddy Shaw

Of the thousands of books published about the Spanish Civil War and the International Brigades, a good proportion are about volunteers in national battalions. Within these narratives commemoration is given to groups with political or sub-national identities, for example the Welsh and Scottish.

One group however – the Jewish volunteers – has had relatively little exposure in the substantial literature about the International Brigades. In particular the topic is almost non-existent in English language publications, with the noticeable exceptions in the UK of Martin Sugarman's hefty document, 'Against Fascism: Jews who served in the International Brigade in the Spanish Civil War' and Richard Baxell's 'Unlikely Warriors'.

In Bill Alexander's book, 'British Volunteers for Liberty', he devotes one small paragraph to Jewish volunteers, stating: 'Little attention was paid to religious or cultural background, and no one thought of keeping any special record of Jewish volunteers.' He does understand, however, why Jews volunteered in the face of Nazi atrocities and fighting Mosley's fascists in London.

This essentially is the big question posed by Gerben Zaagsma's book. Why was there a disproportionate number of Jewish volunteers and did they volunteer because, to some degree or other, of their sense of Jewish 'consciousness'? There is much rigorous detail from substantial research which at times reads like an academic treatise.

The main bulk of the book is given up to the involvement of Jews from Central and Eastern European backgrounds and the hub of Jewish recruitment activity in Paris. There is very little written about British Jewish volunteers, where a link, however, is made about heightened Jewish awareness of the threat of fascism in Europe following the Battle of Cable Street, which was the trigger for many Jews to fight in Spain.

Contribution

Much is made about the contribution of Polish Jews, who accounted for an estimated 40 per cent of volunteers in the Polish Dombrowski Brigade. Many of the Poles were living outside Poland, especially communists who were persecuted by the authoritarian regime in Poland. Paris was the main destination for these exiles, and many if not most were Jewish.

In almost microscopic detail the author describes the internal conflict in Paris of different leftist groups. This was exemplified by the publication of three Yiddish newspapers, one backed by the French Communist Party (at the behest of the Comintern), one by left-wing Zionists and one by the Jewish Bund.

Although the theme throughout the book is that the majority of Jewish volunteers in Spain did not go out of a sense of Jewish consciousness, in Paris the French Communist Party had a Jewish section. Again the author's description of Polish Jewish communists demonstrates that they were a distinct cultural group: Yiddish-speaking and very aware of European antisemitism, and willing to take up arms against fascism. As a consequence, this group of volunteers who proved themselves on the battlefield had the desire to form their own fighting unit.

There are other examples throughout the book to my mind of

demonstrable Jewishness amongst volunteers which are at odds with the main debate.

The book describes in detail the setting up of the Jewish military unit known as the Botwin Company in late 1937. This was a company within the Polish Palafox Battalion of the Dombrowski Brigade. A few of the chapter headings indicate some of the issues involved:

- Nationality politics: acknowledging Jewish volunteers in the International Brigades;
- Between propaganda and fighting the myth of Jewish cowardice.

Iconic

The Botwin Company has become the iconic example of Jewish armed resistance to fascism. It was the enthusiasm from personal experience of the Italian International Brigades inspector Luigi Longo that persuaded André Marty, secretary of the Comintern and commissar of the International Brigades, to set up a Jewish military unit.

This was done partly out of admiration for Jewish Brigaders but also substantially for propaganda reasons. Anti-semitism existed within the International Brigades, especially amongst Polish volunteers who tended to believe the myth of Jewish cowardice and meekness. A booklet was published at the behest of the Comintern's Historic Commission entitled 'Los Judios: Voluntarios de la libertad'. However, it was only printed in Spanish and distributed within the Republican Army. This was done to counter Nationalist antisemitic propaganda.

The final third of this book addresses postwar (both civil war and the Second World War) attitudes within the Jewish and wider communities about Jewish involvement in the Spanish Civil War and armed resistance during the Holocaust.

Changing attitudes encompass the situation in Israel when in 1986 a gathering of veteran Jewish volunteers was addressed by then

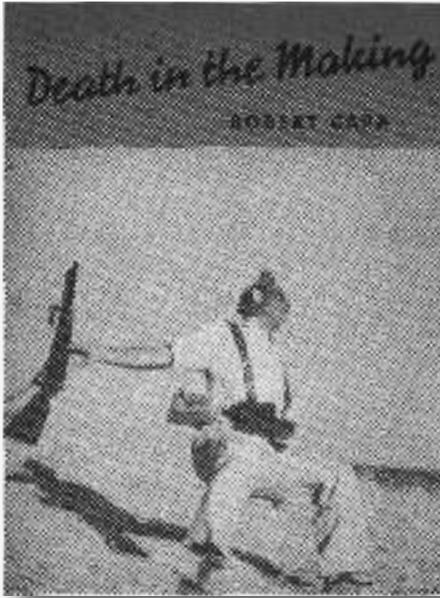
“The author's description of Polish Jewish communists demonstrates that they were a distinct cultural group: Yiddish-speaking and very aware of European anti-semitism, and willing to take up arms against fascism.”

President of Israel Chaim Herzog. His speech honoured the Jewish veterans and all those who fought in Spain. It was hailed as a belated rehabilitation for those whose narrative had been sidelined during the Palestine Mandate period.

This book is a welcome and important addition to the small library of English language books about Jews who fought in Spain. It is rich in detail and honest in so far that at times it militates against its main premise. ▲

The book's introduction can be downloaded at: [http://gerbenzaagsma.org/sites/default/files/Zaagsma-Jewish_volunteers_Introduction.pdf].

Freddy Shaw is a retired East London GP and the son of International Brigade volunteer and Battle of Cable Street veteran Jack Shaw.



Many of the most familiar and striking images from the Spanish Civil War are featured in 'Eyes of the World', a new survey of the lives of Robert Capa and Gerda Taro and their impact on modern photojournalism, writes Jim Jump.

Though Capa went on to work in battle zones of the Second World War and other conflicts, the Spanish Civil War defined his work and indeed that of Taro, who was killed 80 years ago during the Battle of Brunete in July 1937.

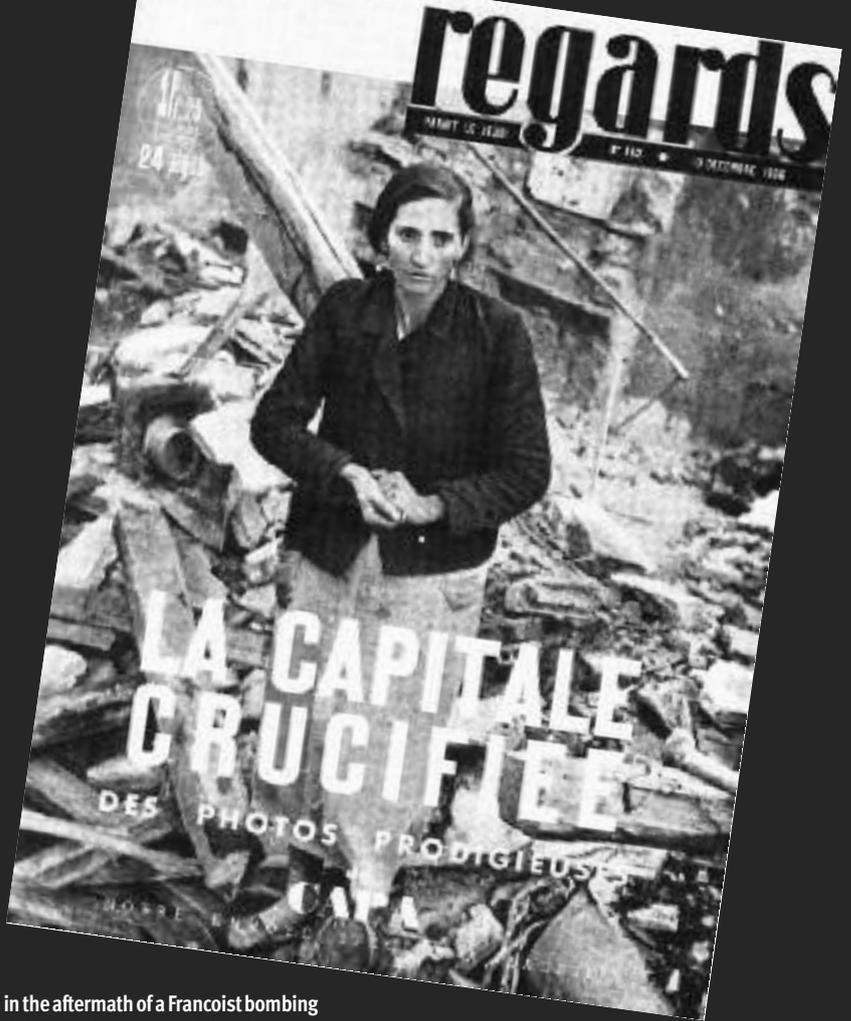
Both were young Jewish refugees from Central Europe, drawn together by love and a shared commitment to anti-fascism. In Spain they were among a small group of photographers – Spanish as well as foreign – who depicted modern warfare as eyewitnesses to events, creating a style that was to set the standard for war photojournalism for the rest of the 20th century.

They were able to do so thanks to the advent of lightweight cameras that could be carried easily into battlefields or bomb-sites. Their powerful photographs went straight from the front line, from the ruined city and from the column of refugees fleeing the enemy advance to news magazines around the world.

Capa and Taro were no mere dispassionate chroniclers of events – although this they did superbly well. They were also activists, deeply committed to the cause of the Spanish Republic and anti-fascism. They would doubtless have agreed with Martha Gellhorn, the great war correspondent in Spain, who later remarked: 'I never believed in that objectivity shit.'

'Eyes of the World' brings together many of their well-known photos – Capa's 'Falling Soldier' is an iconic image of the war (see the book cover pictured above) – as well as those of their close colleague in Spain, David 'Chim' Seymour.

The book includes a written commentary on



Taken in the aftermath of a Francoist bombing raid on Madrid, this image by Robert Capa was used on the cover of the French weekly *Regards*.

Capa, Taro and the images that shaped modern war photography

their time in Paris and Spain and a useful timeline of the war itself.

There is also an appendix discussing the continuing controversy over the 'Falling Soldier' photo. Was it staged or was it real? Where was it actually taken? Whatever the truth, the authors conclude, Capa and Taro in Spain 'risked everything, gave everything, to be as close as possible to the action'.

Though the couple took shots of each other, it was Fred Stein – another young Jewish refugee and photographer – who captured

them together in a Paris café in 1935. This is the main image on the book's cover (see below).

Perhaps the only jarring note in the text is an unnecessary and contentious appendix discussing the Spanish Civil War and the current conflict in Syria. Here the authors see parallels between 'non-intervention' by the Western democracies in Spain and their 'stalemated' stance towards Syria. 'Should the world intervene in Syria?' they ask, seemingly oblivious to the fact that the US, Britain and France have between them spent billions on training and equipping anti-government rebels in Syria. They have also bombed opposing sides in the conflict and sold Turkey, Saudi Arabia and the Gulf States arms that end up in the hands of Al-Qaeda and Isis rebel groups.

All this is a far cry from non-intervention in Spain, when Western governments enforced an arms embargo on the Spanish Republic. 'Intervention' then didn't euphemistically signify invading or bombing a country. ▲



'Eyes of the World: Robert Capa, Gerda Taro and the Invention of Modern Photojournalism' by Marc Aronson and Marina Budhos (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 2017) £17.90.

Telling the story of Guernica

By Jim Jump

Published on the 80th anniversary of one of the defining incidents in modern warfare, a new description of the bombing of Guernica and its aftermath has been written by Paul Preston, the leading historian of the Spanish Civil War.

His concise book appears in two formats and languages: in English as a downloadable e-book and in Spanish as a graphic storybook with illustrations by José Pablo García.

'The Destruction of Guernica' recounts how the small town of Guernica was ruthlessly and relentlessly fire-bombed by Luftwaffe planes on 26 April 1937. Terrified inhabitants were machine-gunned as they tried to flee.

The same text has been translated into Spanish and appears in 'La Muerte de Guernica', Preston's second collaboration with José Pablo García. Last year they produced 'La Guerra Civil Española', a comic-book Spanish version of 'A Concise History of the Spanish Civil War'.

The ancient Basque capital of Guernica was targeted by Hitler's Condor Legion during the Francoist offensive in northern Spain in the spring of 1937. At least 1,650 people are now known to have been killed in an aerial assault that was methodically planned by Wolfram Von Richthofen in consultation with Franco's high command.

Though not the first example of terror bombing of civilians by Franco and his allies, Guernica almost instantly achieved special notoriety.



This is because the South African-born reporter George Steer rushed from nearby Bilbao to see the still smoldering ruins of the town. He established beyond doubt that German planes and bombs had perpetrated the crime. His account was published in *The Times* and reproduced in newspapers around the world.

Steer's report went on to inspire Pablo Picasso to create 'Guernica' for the Spanish Republic's pavilion at the Paris world fair in 1937. It remains the Spaniard's most famous painting and is now a universal symbol for the horrors of war.

Meanwhile Franco, sensing the international outcry, immediately attempted a cover-up. Denying any responsibility for the atrocity – despite the conclusive evidence to the contrary – he blamed retreating Republican forces. This lie was kept alive during his dictatorship and was

still being repeated by some of Franco's apologists even after his death in 1975.

'Steer's account of the bombing of Guernica perhaps had more political impact than any single article written by any correspondent during the Spanish Civil War,' writes Paul Preston.

To underline the bombing's continued aftershocks, Preston's book finishes with a description of how, on 18 September 1970, Joséba

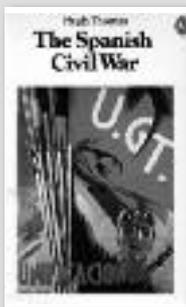
Elosegi, a Basque nationalist, set fire to himself while Franco presided over the world jai-alai (pelota) championships in San Sebastián.

Elosegi had been in command of the only Basque military unit present in Guernica on 26 April 1937. By hurling himself in flames in front of the dictator, Elosegui hoped to make him understand what the Basque people had suffered in their flesh. 'It was to no avail. Franco remained coldly impassive as the badly burned Elosegi was taken away. For the dictator... his disregard for the fate of the Basques was as harsh in 1970 as it had been in 1937.' ▲

● 'The Destruction of Guernica' (e-book) by Paul Preston (London: HarperPress, 2017) £0.85 (Kindle edition).

● 'La Muerte de Guernica' by Paul Preston and José Pablo García (Barcelona: Debate, 2017) 19.95 euros.

Hugh Thomas An appreciation



IBMT Chair **RICHARD BAXELL** mourns the death of the author of a groundbreaking history of the Spanish Civil War.

Many years ago now, I was a young (ish) undergraduate history student, excited at the prospect of taking a course in the Spanish Civil War. At the time, like many in Britain, my knowledge of one of the 20th century's most seismic events was based primarily, if not solely, on two works; one a memoir by a British

novelist; the other, a novel by an American journalist and writer. Yet neither 'Homage to Catalonia' nor 'For Whom the Bell Tolls', important though they may be, can in any way be seen as histories of the conflict. Consequently, like many students before me and since, I immersed myself in the encyclopaedic study, 'The Spanish Civil War'. The author was Hugh Thomas, who died on 7 May 2017 at the age of 85.

Published in 1961 to coincide with the 25th anniversary of the war's outbreak, 'The Spanish Civil War' was generally well received by

critics. Smuggled into Spain during the Franco dictatorship, it became a clandestine best-seller. Eminently readable and packed full of entertaining anecdotes, the book has become seen as *the* history of the civil war. It has now run to four editions and sold more than a million copies across the world. The book still appears on undergraduate reading lists today and I know that I am not the only historian of the civil war to consult it regularly.

However, it is by no means faultless; there are many errors of fact and judgement and Thomas has rightly been accused of occasionally valuing narrative style above factual accuracy. Fortunately, revisions have gradually been made during later editions, such as the removal of the following offensive description of the International Brigaders: 'Many of the British volunteers appear to have been persons who desired some outlet through which to purge some private grief or maladjustment.'

In 1966 Thomas was made Professor of History at the University of Reading. When he took a sabbatical in 1974 to concentrate on his writing, his research assistant, a promising young historian called Paul Preston, took over his teaching duties.

Thomas's other books included 'History of Cuba' (1971), 'An Unfinished History of the World' (1979), 'The Conquest of Mexico' (1993) and a trilogy about the Spanish Empire: 'Rivers of Gold' (2003), 'The Golden Age' (2010) and 'World Without End' (2014). ▲

A un mundo que ha sido testigo de las matanzas desencadenadas por Hitler y Stalin, por no hablar de las guerras de Corea, Vietnam e Irak, la Guerra Civil española puede parecerle algo insignificante.



Después de Dresde e Hiroshima, la destrucción de Guernica podría antojarse una mera barbarie de segunda fila.

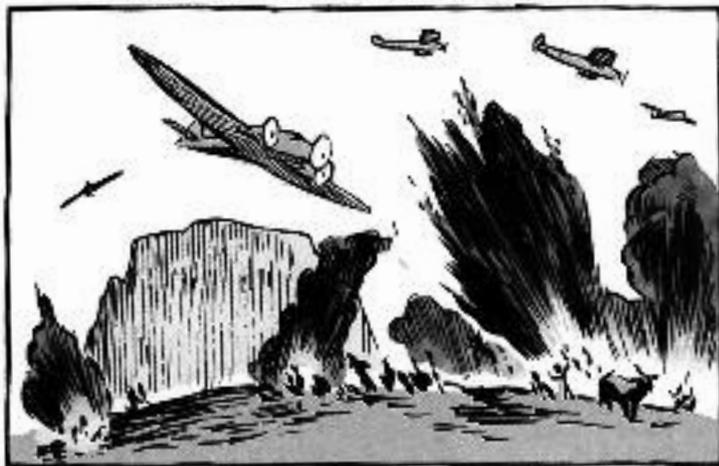


Sin embargo, pese a todo ello, el bombardeo de esta aletargada ciudad vasca y su mercado el 26 de abril de 1937 probablemente haya causado una polémica más airada que cualquier acto de guerra acaecido desde entonces, y buena parte de dicha polémica ha girado en torno al artículo de Steer.



Esto obedece en parte a que lo sucedido en Guernica se percibió como la primera ocasión en que un bombardeo aéreo arrasaba un objetivo civil indefenso en Europa.

En realidad, el bombardeo de civiles inocentes era una práctica afianzada en las colonias de las potencias occidentales, y poco antes los italianos lo habían ejecutado de manera sistemática en Abisinia.



Incluso en España, el bombardeo de Guernica estuvo precedido por el bombardeo sistemático de Madrid y la destrucción de la cercana Durango por bombarderos alemanes a finales de marzo de 1937.

In this sample page from 'La Muerte de Guernica' the captions say...

- To a world which has witnessed the slaughter unleashed by Hitler and Stalin, to say nothing of the Korean, Vietnam and Iraq wars, the Spanish Civil War might well seem small beer.
- After Dresden and Hiroshima, the destruction of Guernica could appear to be no more than a second rate piece of tuggery.
- Yet, for all that, the bombing of the sleepy Basque market town on 26 April 1937 has probably provoked more savage polemic than any single act of war since and much of that polemic has revolved around [George] Steer's article.

- This is partly because what happened at Guernica was perceived as the first time that aerial bombardment wiped out an undefended civilian target in Europe.
- In fact, the bombing of innocent civilians was a well-established practice in the colonies of the Western powers and had most recently and most thoroughly been carried out by the Italians in Abyssinia.
- Even in Spain, the bombing of Guernica had been preceded by the destruction of nearby Durango by German bombers at the end of March 1937.

Remembering Hugh Sloan

Fife coalminer, illustrator, poet and International Brigader who was ‘small in stature, large in life’

By Jim Jump

Born on 21 August 1912 in Denbeath, Fife, Hugh Smith Sloan was the son of Elizabeth and Richard Sloan, a pit sinker and miner. The eldest of five, from an early age he developed a talent for art. But like his father, he became a coalminer and mineworkers’ union activist, taking part in many campaigns for better wages and conditions in the Fife coalfield.

In the 1930s the Communist Party was an influential force in Fife – Willie Gallacher was the Communist MP for West Fife from 1935 to 1950 – and Hugh soon became a party member. It wasn’t long either before he was producing satirical sketches for the *Daily Worker*, as well as for *The Spark* and *The Flame*, pit papers respectively of the Wellesley and Michael collieries. It was also at this time that he began writing poetry.

Hugh was an avid reader and a self-taught Marxist. He would joke to daughter Betty that he was a bit of a freak: ‘a working class intellectual and there’s supposed to be no such thing’.

Going to Spain was the ‘logical development of my political ideas’, he said many years later, adding: ‘In 1936, when Franco revolted against the democratically elected Republican government in Spain, it was like an inspiration to youngsters like me all over the world.’

Hugh left for Spain in April 1937. Arrested in Calais soon after setting foot in France and promptly deported to the UK, he finally entered Spain in May on his second attempt. He joined the British Anti-Tank Battery, acting as runner, secretary and paymaster, and taking part in actions at Brunete



Hugh Sloan, bottom left, with the British Anti-Tank Battery in Spain in 1937.



Left: Laying a wreath at the Kirkcaldy memorial to the International Brigades in 1982 with Anne Knight, who had been a nurse in Spain.



Right: Hugh’s cover sketch for ‘No to Franco: The Struggle Never Stopped 1939-1975’ by Bill Alexander, which was published in 1992.

and Quinto in 1937 and Teruel in the winter of 1937/38. With the British Battalion he crossed the Ebro in the summer of 1938 at the start of the Battle of the Ebro.

Repatriated in December 1938 with the rest of the battalion, Hugh returned to Scotland to work in the mines, where he stayed until 1964 when he was advised to quit on health grounds. He then worked as a ganger, laying a pipeline to clean the River Leven, and later as a caretaker at Kirkland High School.

‘When I returned home I found that I couldn’t bear to talk about Spain and the sense of loss that I felt about it,’ he told interviewers half a century later. ‘The sense of loss was equal to the contribution that you felt you had made, and that was tremendous.’

He never tired of explaining that the war in Spain only arose because of the ‘treachery’ of ‘non-intervention’ by the British and French governments, a policy, he would point out, that even withheld financial interest on the Spanish Republic’s reserves in the City of London.

‘Non-intervention was as it had always meant to be – a dead duck that was merely to prevent any victory for the Republican government in Spain,’ he insisted.

Hugh Sloan died in December 1994, aged 82. The anonymous eulogy in his funeral brochure noted: ‘Although small in stature he was large in life, intellect and courage, fortified by his Marxist philosophy and his unquenchable loyalty to his class... There was never a need for a poet to tell him that no man is an island; he knew that from infancy and it guided his life.’ ▲

Hugh Sloan describes his experiences in Spain in ‘Voices from the Spanish Civil War: Personal Recollections of Scottish Volunteers in the Spanish Civil War’ by Ian Macdougall (ed), Edinburgh: Polygon (1986). He was also interviewed for the Imperial War Museum’s sound archive of International Brigaders. Other sources can be found in the archives at the Marx Memorial Library in London.

Hugh Sloan lived long enough to be one of those volunteers who was able to return to a democratic Spain. He wrote this poem after one such visit. It was first published in ‘Poems from Spain: British and Irish International Brigaders on the Spanish Civil War’ by Jim Jump (ed), Lawrence & Wishart, London (2006).

A Tribute

Jumping the skies and time in
search of our future
The plane slips evenly forward
through the dark night.
Just a short flip and we are there.
Yesterday, when we were young,
the trip was longer and devious
And our cause lay footsore over the
mountains and through the
valleys.
Like a gathering storm we came as
droplets, mountain streams
then raging torrents

And the fury was heard all over the
Earth and stirred its sympathy.
Fascism was striding across Europe
and the brave Spanish people
were breaking the shackles of
feudalism.
Guernica was calling for revenge
and humanity responded and
sent its sons.
We became one people defending
the homes of Spain and our own
Against a murdering pestilence
that threatened a thousand
years of enslavement
Serving in a People’s Army for a
people’s cause.
There was no other way we could go.
With idealism in our minds, we
were no idealists,
With passion in our hearts, we were
no romantics,
With fire in our bellies, we were no
warriors.
We were doing the job that life had
thrust upon us.

The IBMT's ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING will take place on Saturday 14 October 2017 at the offices of the GMB, Garley House, 17 Newport Road, Cardiff CF24 0TB as part of a COMMEMORATION WEEKEND in and around Cardiff

Weekend programme

Check [www.international-brigades.org.uk] for any updates.

Friday 13 October

● 7pm: Wine reception sponsored by Unite the Union, 1 Cathedral Road, Cardiff CF11 9SD (at the junction with Cowbridge Road East); followed by a screening of the award-winning 2005 TV documentary 'Return Journey' (30 mins), about the return of Alun Menai Williams to Spain, introduced by filmmaker Sarah Dickens of BBC Wales.

Saturday 14 October

● 11am: Commemoration at the Wales International Brigade Memorial, Cathays Park (behind City Hall, Cardiff CF10 3AD).
● 2pm: IBMT Annual General Meeting opened by Carwyn Jones, First Minister of Wales, at GMB, Garley House, 17 Newport Road, Cardiff CF24 0TB (opposite Mercure Hotel).
● 7pm: Social at the Temple of Peace, King Edward VII Avenue, Cardiff CF10

3AP (two-minute walk from the Wales International Brigade Memorial).

Sunday 15 October

● 10.15am: By coach to the Big Pit National Coal Museum, Blaenavon NP4 9XP (£10 return coach fare).
● 11.30am: Commemoration at the Big Pit memorial to Welsh miners who went to Spain.
● 12pm: Talk by Graham Davies about his book 'You Are Legend – Welsh Volunteers in the Spanish Civil War'.
● 3pm: Leave Big Pit.
● 4pm: Arrive back in Cardiff.

Accommodation

It is advisable to book hotel accommodation as early as possible. All the Cardiff venues are in the city centre and are within easy walking distance of the majority of hotels. Some small hotels and B&Bs are located in and around Cathedral Road. More information from Mary Greening: memsec@international-brigades.org.uk (mobile: 07772 620 279).

AGM agenda

- (1) Chair's opening remarks
- (2) Apologies for absence
- (3) Approval of minutes of the 2016 Annual General Meeting
- (4) Matters arising from the 2016 AGM minutes
- (5) Executive Committee's report
- (6) Financial report
- (7) Election of officers and Executive Committee members
- (8) Any other business
- (9) Date and place of next Annual General Meeting
- (10) Chair's closing remarks

● *Nominations for Chair, Secretary and Treasurer and for up to 10 Executive Committee members must be made in writing and received by the Secretary (see contact details below) by 8am on 30 September 2017.*

● *Proposed items for agenda item (8) must be received in writing by the Secretary (see contact details below) by 8am on 7 October 2017.*

● *Send nominations and proposed agenda items by email to: secretary@international-brigades.org.uk or by post to: IBMT Secretary, 37a Clerkenwell Green, London EC1R 0DU.*



Wales International Brigade Memorial in Cardiff's Cathays Park.

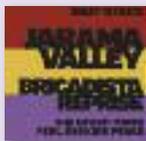


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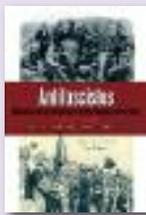
IBMT merchandise

Proceeds help fund our commemorative, educational and publicity work



CD single

Exclusively for the IBMT, Billy Bragg performs 'Jarama Valley' and Maxine Peake delivers Dolores Ibárruri's (La Pasionaria's) emotional farewell speech to the International Brigades with a dub backing from The Urban Roots.
£5 plus £1.99 p&p



Antifascistas

British and Irish Volunteers in the Spanish Civil War

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



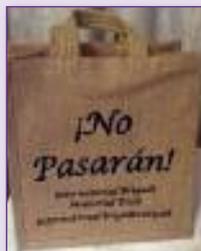
15th International Brigade t-shirt

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).
£15 plus £4.99 p&p



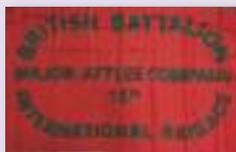
Connolly Column t-shirt

Black cotton t-shirt with design (pictured) in Spanish Republican colours across chest commemorating the volunteers from Ireland. Available in S, M, L, XL.
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.
£4.99 plus £2.99 p&p



Replica flag

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



Volunteers for Liberty plate

Highly decorative commemorative plate made 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.
SPECIAL OFFER: £19.99 plus £5.99 p&p



IBMT badge

Solid metal badge with International Brigade medal in centre and 'International Brigade Memorial Trust' around the edge.
£3 plus £2.99 p&p



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.
£29.99 plus £7.99 p&p

Send orders, including your name and address, a size and colour where appropriate, and a cheque payable to the IBMT to: IBMT Merchandise, 37a Clerkenwell Green, London EC1R 0DU.

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

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.

Free postage & packing on goods totalling £30 or more