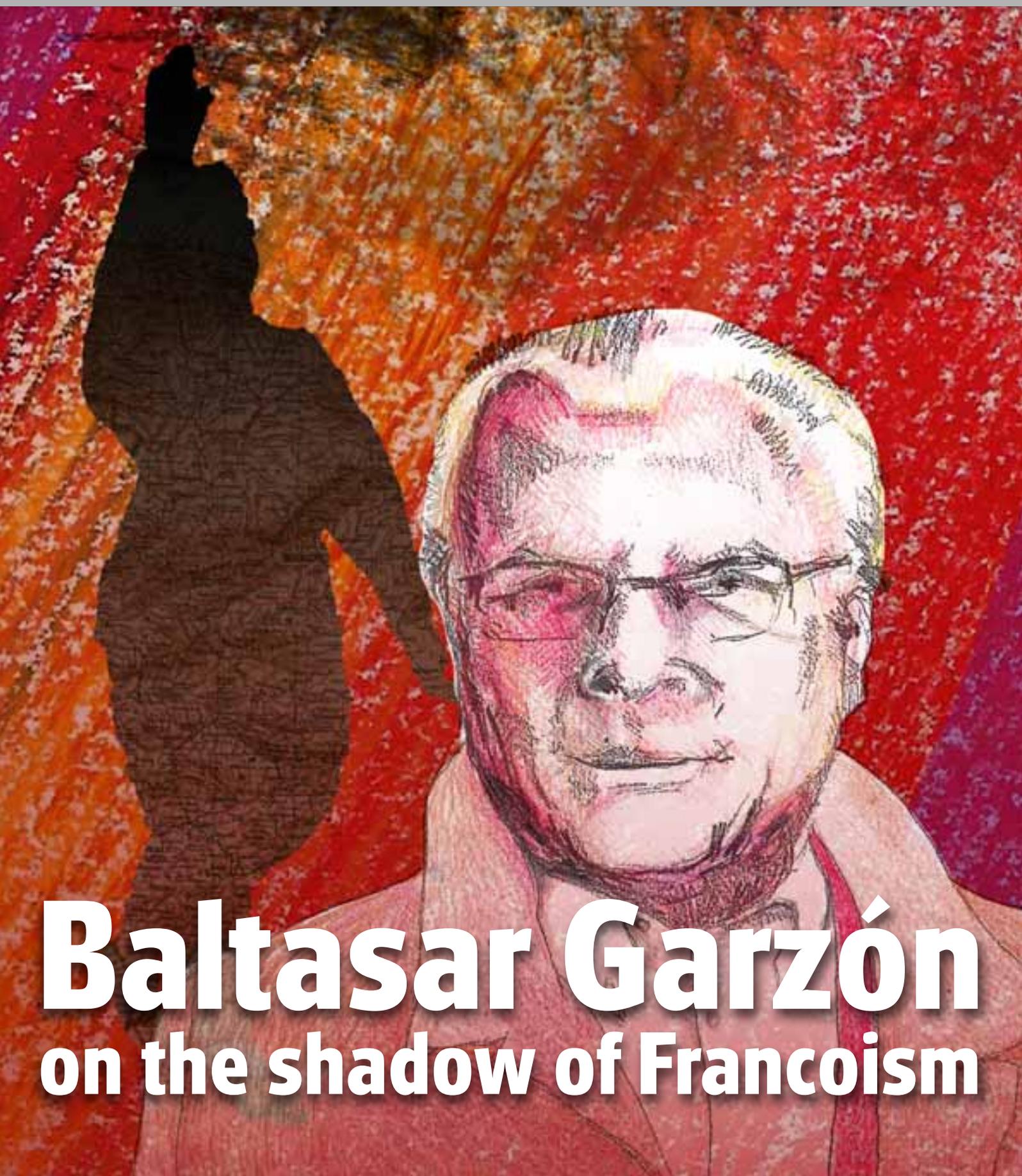




¡NO PASARÁN!

International Brigade Memorial Trust ● 2-2021 ● £5



Baltasar Garzón on the shadow of Francoism

IN HONOUR OF OVER 2100 MEN &
WOMEN VOLUNTEERS WHO LEFT
THESE SHORES TO FIGHT SIDE
BY SIDE WITH THE SPANISH PEOPLE
IN THEIR HEROIC STRUGGLE
AGAINST FASCISM 1936 ~ 1939
MANY WERE WOUNDED AND
MAIMED 526 WERE KILLED
THEIR EXAMPLE INSPIRED
THE WORLD



INTERNATIONAL BRIGADE MEMORIAL TRUST

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

37a Clerkenwell Green, London EC1R 0DU ● 07865 272 639
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Support our vital educational and commemorative work by becoming a
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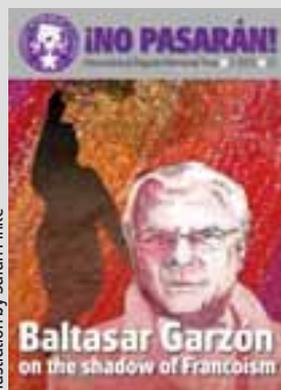


Illustration by Sarah Finke

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Maxine Peake opens AGM with tribute to the volunteers

IBMT Patron and actor Maxine Peake (above) kicked off the Trust's postponed 2020 Annual General Meeting, held online on 20 March 2021, with a stirring tribute to the International Brigades. She said:

It's a pleasure to say a few words at this Annual General Meeting of the International Brigade Memorial Trust.

I'm proud to be an IBMT Patron. I remember my step-grandfather in Salford telling me about the brave men and women of the International Brigades and how the world should have listened to them.

Since then I've always taken an interest in their story, so it was a special honour when the IBMT invited me to become a Patron in 2013.

The past year has been a difficult one for all of us. But it's heartening to have seen that you have maintained much of your commemorative and educational work, whether over Zoom or at socially distanced events.

The IBMT does incredibly important work. Without it, many people wouldn't know that two and a half thousand men and women defied their own government and heeded Spain's cry for help.

Many left their home towns and villages for the first time in their lives to make the journey to what was then a distant land.

They knew the cause was right. They defended the Spanish Republic against fascist

CONTINUED OVERLEAF

The 2021 IBMT raffle

Readers in the UK will find two books of IBMT raffle tickets (10 tickets per book at £1 per ticket) enclosed with their copy of *iNo Pasarán!*

We hope everyone will either buy the tickets or sell them on to family and friends.

The IBMT 2021 No Pasarán Raffle offers a first prize of £500 in cash.

The second prize is a set of six glorious Spanish wines and third is a case of Brigadista Pale Ale. There are also many

other prizes for runners-up.

The draw will take place on 9 October 2021, during the IBMT's Annual General Meeting weekend in Southampton. Results will also be published on the IBMT website.

Return all completed stubs and cheques, payable to: IBMT, 37a Clerkenwell Green, London EC1R 0DU. Note that each ticket purchaser's telephone number is all that is needed on each stub.

We are offering a £50 prize for whoever sells the most tickets.

When returning tickets and money, please also give your own name and phone number.

If you would like additional raffle ticket books, contact the office at admin@international-brigades.org.uk.

Please return any unwanted or unsold tickets to the above address so that they can be sold to others.

Proceeds from the raffle will help fund our vital educational and commemorative work.



NEWS

IBMT secures funding for secondary schools teaching project

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

This autumn will see the launch of a major new education initiative by the IBMT in a partnership with the history department of Leeds University.

The plan is for second-year history students at the university to draw up secondary school teaching materials on the Spanish Civil War and International Brigades.

The IBMT has secured a £2,000 grant from the Lipman-Miliband Trust to fund the project. Most of the money will be spent on digitising

and designing the teaching packages for school teachers and pupils. These will be posted in a new 'Schools' section on the IBMT website.

Drive

In addition, there will be a drive to alert teachers to the availability of the new teaching tools and to advise them on how the war in Spain and its impact on Britain can be taught in schools within the national curriculum.

Led by Associate Professor Peter Anderson,

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Historical Consultant Richard Baxell

AGM message

FROM PREVIOUS PAGE

aggression, and more than one in five of them died in Spain.

Their story doesn't get taught in schools, though it should be. So it's up to us, in the IBMT, to spread the word, among our friends and families, in our unions, in our local communities.

This is our history, the people's history. This is the story of ordinary people doing extraordinary things, of working people, not for the first or last time, knowing and acting better than their political masters.

I know that the business of AGMs can seem a bit boring, with lots of talk about about finances, meetings and elections. All that's important and necessary to run the Trust, but let's never lose sight of the big picture.

Let's always remember why we're here – to keep alive the incredible story of the International Brigades and to make sure their example of antifascism and international solidarity is remembered, not just for our sakes, but so that it can be passed on to inspire future generations. ¡No pasarán!

The IBMT's 2020 AGM had originally been scheduled for 10 October last year but was cancelled because of pandemic restrictions. Therefore the Executive Committee decided to convene the AGM in March 2021, for the first time as an online event.

The meeting saw four current EC members elected for three-year terms. Among them is Paul Coles, who was last year co-opted onto the committee and elected as Treasurer. The others are Alex Gordon and John Haywood, who have been EC members since 2017, and Jonathan Havard, who was first elected in 2019.

In addition, David Chanter joins the executive as a job-share with John Haywood. Both of

'This is our history, the people's history. This is the story of ordinary people doing extraordinary things.'

them are leading members of the Oxford International Brigades Memorial Committee. Paul Coles replaces Tosh McDonald, who did not seek re-election following the expiry of his term of office that began in 2017.

At the Executive Committee meeting immediately following the AGM, Jim Jump was re-elected as IBMT Chair for a further year, along with Megan Dobney as Secretary and Paul Coles as Treasurer. The fourth of the Trust's 'Honorary Officers', Marlene Sidaway, is not required to stand for re-election.

The draft minutes of the AGM are available to read on the IBMT website.



the history undergraduates at Leeds University will create the teaching and learning aids for Key Stage 3 (ages 11 to 14).

The project consultant is Alex Clifford, a secondary school history teacher in Newcastle

and the author of two military histories of the Spanish Civil War.

IBMT Chair Jim Jump said the Schools Project was an exciting new development for the IBMT. 'We've been aware for a while that the

◀ Teaching materials will help school pupils learn about the International Brigades and Spanish Civil War.

Spanish Civil War and the International Brigades aren't being taught widely enough in schools. Hopefully our new teaching and learning packages will help put this right.'

He continued: 'The war against fascism in Spain was a major event in modern European history. Yet few people know about it, let alone the response of British people.'

A local history element will be part of the teaching packages, he added, enabling pupils to study the impact of the war in their town or region, for example its International Brigade volunteers or homes for Basque refugee children.

The Leeds history students will be offered the option of working on the IBMT Schools Project as part of their 2021/22 course options, with a maximum group of five students undertaking the work from October 2021 to June 2022.

Remembrance during lockdown

IBMT Film Coordinator Marshall Mateer writes...

In July last year a small group gathered – socially distanced – at the national memorial in Jubilee Gardens in London. As Jeremy Corbyn spoke to the camera and a quiet Jubilee Gardens, I uploaded a short video to the IBMT Flickr page as a personal act of remembrance. Later I noticed several other IBMT members had made similar posts on their Facebook pages.

From this developed the 'Remembering in a Time of Lockdown' project, made up of Flickr galleries, each with a large photomontage accompanied by stories and images.

There are now over 40 pages from events around the world: Spain, Belgium, Poland, Germany, Croatia and several pages from Spain. They come from sister organisations and individuals, and there have been more than 30,000 views.

The latest pages include the recent

commemoration at Tarancón and last September's online event from San Francisco.

People have remembered in many ways: a raised fist sculpted in wood as a birthday present, memories of 1930s Manchester; coming across a memorial on holiday; a short video about the new mural to refugees in Gernika.

In Britain and Ireland many of us are involved in setting up new memorials. In Perušić, Croatia, they fear that their memorial may be removed. In Poland young people in face masks took to the streets to remember the International Brigades despite the pressures against them.

The 'Remembering' project will continue until the pandemic eases. Unsurprisingly the pandemic has not hindered our desire to reflect and commemorate the meaning and value of the International Brigades and their cause. *¡La lucha continúa!*

To discuss the project or contribute stories please contact: film@international-brigades.org.uk



Note on annual commemoration

This year the IBMT hopes to be able to organise an annual commemoration at the International Brigade memorial on London's South Bank at 1pm on Saturday 3 July. However, as we go to press, we do not know whether restrictions will have eased enough by then to hold the commemoration as a public event. Members will be kept updated through the *IBMT eNewsletter* and our website.



Your local International Brigade memorial group

Several independent locally-based International Brigade memorial groups have sprung up around the country in recent years. The IBMT welcomes this development and supports their work.

Local groups that join the IBMT gain extra benefits. They receive additional copies of *iNo Pasarán!*; they can buy IBMT merchandise at discount prices for resale; their details are published in this magazine so that members in their area can contact them; they enjoy all the rights of IBMT membership; they receive priority support and advice from the Trust.

To join, local groups pay an annual membership fee of £30. Download the application form from the 'Membership' page of our website (www.international-brigades.org.uk) or phone 07865 272 639 to request a membership affiliation form.

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NEWS

Connie Fraser (1921-2021)

On 26 March Connie Fraser, IBMT founding member and widow of International Brigader Harry Fraser, died aged 99. She is pictured (below) speaking at a commemoration before the International Brigade memorial on London's South Bank in 2004. A poem by her about the International Brigades, written in the summer of 1998, is reproduced here. A full obituary is available to read on the IBMT website.



Peter Marshall

Brigaders' Reunion

These frail old men are young and strong today,
Bearing the banner upright as they stand
Steadied with sticks or helped by caring hand
Protective as the stone arms round their dead.

Yet once these same legs climbed the Pyrenees
By smugglers' paths in sheltering of night,
With spirits high and blistered urban feet
They came to aid the Spanish people's fight.

So long ago and yet so close at hand,
The weary blur of battle on strange ground,
The heat and cold, the hunger and the thirst,
Persistence when the odds were all against.

Now a new speaker tells the old brave tale,
Putting some sort of pattern to the whole,
The song that always follows sounds again
Ragged at first – 'Jarama' – then the pain
And pride swell out to fill their shrinking world.

And we who were not there join in, aware
Their fading eyes show what we cannot hear,
The ageless guilt which all survivors feel
That they live on when friends and comrades fell.
For them – and us – and brothers not yet born,
We raise clenched fists and shout '¡No pasarán!'

CONNIE FRASER

Len Crome lecture online

The IBMT's annual Len Crome Memorial Conference, held on Saturday 20 March, saw almost 200 members and supporters from across the world tune in to an online talk on the question 'Was the Spanish Republic worth dying for?'

The event featured Paul Preston in conversation with Helen Graham (right), with an introduction from Peter Crome, who spoke about his father Len Crome, after whom the IBMT's annual conference is named. Proceedings were chaired by IBMT Historical Consultant Richard Baxell. The conference is available to stream in full on the IBMT's YouTube page.



UK-born Lincoln volunteer who survived shooting and prison



◀ Syd (seated, second from right) with returning Canadian volunteers.

Historian **JERRY HARRIS** tells the story of his father Sydney ‘Syd’ Harris, a Leeds-born American volunteer who grew up an orphan in Chicago. Enlisting for Spain in 1937, Harris faced battle, a brush with death and a spell in a fascist prisoner of war camp.

My father, Sydney Harris, was born in Leeds in 1916 to working-class Jewish parents. His father had been a medic with the British Army in the First World War and suffered lung damage from mustard gas, and his mother died in the influenza plague in 1919. Travelling to America, Syd’s father put him in a Jewish orphanage in Chicago at the age of five, where he stayed until he graduated from high school.

Leaving the orphanage in the middle of the Great Depression wasn’t easy. Syd began to box at the Golden Gloves level, and when his stockyard foreman called him a ‘kike’ Syd knocked him to the floor and got fired. Syd had begun to hear about fascism, its antisemitism and

its threat to democracy. So, in 1937, he joined the Young Communist League and decided to volunteer for the Lincoln Battalion.

When Syd got on the bus for the trip to New York, Eddie Balchowsky came walking up, his arms around two girls and a bottle of champagne in hand. Eddie was from a well-off Jewish family and had been studying to be a concert pianist at the University of Illinois. But Eddie was on his way to Spain too, and so the working-class, orphan kid and the radical, privileged student were to become life-long friends. On their way to Communist Party headquarters in New York, Eddie heard someone playing Mozart from a second story window. Eyes bright with passion he turned to Syd, pointed to the window

and said: ‘That’s why I’m going to Spain!’

The two young men got to Spain in late November 1937. Eddie was assigned to scout for the Canadian Mac-Paps and Syd stayed with the Lincolns. Syd grew up reading Rudyard Kipling and said, at the training camp in Figueres, that it broke his heart to learn that Kipling was a big imperialist. But years later he still liked to quote the ending of ‘Gunga Din’. ‘You’re a better man than I,’ said the British officer to the water boy Gunga Din. That’s the lesson he took from the book.

Teruel

Syd became a sergeant and fought at Teruel in the winter of 1937/38. But in April 1938, during the retreat, he was shot and captured. For a month the Lincolns had battled and conceded ground, first from Belchite, to Albalate, Caspe, and Maella. Finally, they tried to break through fascist lines to reach the Republican-held city of Gandesa. Failing the charge, the Lincolns retreated to a hill overlooking a small valley.

Syd was ordered to take three men across the central valley road, up the facing hill to look over

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FROM PREVIOUS PAGE

the heights and report back on enemy activity. But while separated from the battalion, a company of fascist cavalry came riding through the valley. The Lincolns opened fire, forcing the fascists up the opposite hill, riding straight towards Syd and his comrades. Firing from behind a tree, he heard a rustling from behind. Quickly turning he saw a soldier on horseback aiming his rifle straight at his head. Syd's quick movement spooked the horse into rearing, causing the shot to hit his ankle. Knocked off his feet, he went tumbling down the hill and smashed into a boulder, with the cavalryman in quick pursuit. But to get a shot the fascist would have to expose himself to fire from the Lincolns and instead retreated up the hill. The battle was soon over and both fascists and Lincolns abandoned the area.

Syd found himself alone, with two grenades, a gaping wound and unable to move. As the sun was going down, he spied two women clothed in Spanish black walking down the road. One was an

‘May the day be soon that they also can once again breath the fresh air of liberty for which they sacrificed so much to defend.’

older woman and the other, Susana, was just 17 years old. They were Republican supporters. They promised to come back and, as night set, Susana reappeared with an orange and egg. By this time Syd was going into shock and shaking from the cold. Susana held him throughout the night, keeping him warm in her comforting arms. It was the first time Syd had spent the night in the arms of a woman. In the morning she went to seek help, but before she returned, Italian fascists appeared picking up the dead.

Spying Syd, they rushed up shouting: ‘You red bastard we’ll kill you right here, you fucking Russian Bolshevik!’ Syd cried out: ‘No, no I’m American from Chicago!’ Suddenly the shouting stopped. The Italian lieutenant cocked his head: ‘Chicago?’ Syd replied: ‘Yes, for Christ’s sake Chicago!’ Suddenly a broad smile broke out on the lieutenant’s face. He fired off his machine gun into the air, looked at Syd, and said: ‘Chicago, home of Al Capone! Take him alive!’

Dragged into town, Syd was thrown into a barn and fell into an exhausted sleep. A little while later he woke to shouts and kicks with German soldiers standing over him yelling: ‘You

red bastard we’re going to kill you right here, fucking Russian Bolshevik!’ The Italians rushed in and an argument raged over who owned the prisoner. Luckily for Syd, in Italy’s first victory over Germany since the Roman Empire, they managed to expel the German troops.

He was sent to a prison hospital in Bilbao where he spent four months. While there, the Spanish authorities were letting a German doctor experiment on the patients. In a letter Syd wrote that the ‘fascist hospital reminded me of the slaughter and butcher houses back home... Injections were given only to the Internationals to “make your blood better”.’ After two died and a third went out of his mind the prisoners rioted and tore up the ward, and the hospital administration finally removed the German doctor.

Prisoner

Syd was sent to the prisoner of war camp at San Pedro de Cardena. As the 700 inmates lined up for review, a colonel led them through salutes to fascist Spain. The last was a straight-arm salute to Franco. But instead of shouting Franco the men let out the cry ‘Fuck you!’ The colonel looked sternly at the men, and then smiled. ‘Otra vez!’ ‘Fuck you!’ ‘Uno más!’ ‘Fuck you!’

Syd turned to the guy next to him: ‘What the hell is going on?’

‘The colonel doesn’t speak English, and to him ‘fuck you’ sounds like Franco with an English accent.’

But life at the prisoner of war camp was anything but easy. Syd recounted his experience, writing:

Cold cement floor full of holes, broken stairs, thousands of mice, rats and vermin of all kinds... As we drove in we received our first view of what was later to be a daily occurrence: a sergeant with a long leather, reinforced, twisted cane-whip, lashing out among a group of men. We all had our share of beatings from shell-shocked sergeants who didn’t even try to give any reasons in explanation of their actions. Too many of us bear scars from sticks, rifle butts, fists or boots, they used them all. They got a genuine pleasure and joy in making and seeing us as miserable as possible.

Always hungry, unable to concentrate, to exercise, lying on louse and flea-ridden mattresses all day waiting for a ladle full of beans and two rotten sardines. Clothed only in pants, shirts and slippers in a cell with damp and windy climate; no wonder 10 of our comrades died and most of the others were sick all the time. Three water taps for 700 men to wash themselves, their clothes, and plates in... planning for the day when once again we could be MEN. Freedom. Liberty, how we appreciate those words now. But in the



▲ Syd at an anti-fascist rally in Chicago after his return from Spain.

midst of that feeling comes the thought of our comrades, especially those from the countries dominated by fascists, who are still in national Spain. Always picked upon to receive the worst treatment by the guards, they have the courage, self-discipline, and intestinal fortitude that belongs to men convinced of the righteousness of their actions and a deep and everlasting love of liberty and democracy. May the day be soon that they also can once again breath the fresh air of liberty and freedom for which they sacrificed so much to defend; until then salud comrades.

When he went to Spain Syd was still not an American citizen, and so was released with the Canadian volunteers. He returned to the US by way of Toronto, married Rose Fine, and became a well-known labour photographer and journalist. He served as head of the Lincolns’ Veterans’ Lodge and often organised security for Paul Robeson when he sang in Chicago, acting as his personal bodyguard. During the McCarthy period the FBI threatened to deport him back to the UK, but Syd held strong, remained politically committed and active, and became a US citizen in 1957. He named his first son Paul after Robeson, his middle name Aaron, after Aaron Lopoff. Lopoff was Syd’s commander in Spain who he described as the ‘bravest man he ever knew.’ After five sons his last child was a girl. He named her Suzanne after Susana.

A tale of two (or three) Fishers

JIM JUMP follows IBMT Trustee Alan Lloyd's attempts to untangle the story of International Brigade volunteer Herbert Douglas Fisher (right).

According to official International Brigade records, Herbert Douglas Fisher is said to have died in November 1938 from wounds received at the Battle of the Ebro. But research by Southampton-based Alan Lloyd now shows that Herbert has been confused with another Fisher, John Herbert, who, though wounded in the same battle, in fact survived and returned to Britain.

Lloyd, an IBMT Trustee, is currently writing a book on the International Brigade volunteers from Hampshire and the Isle of Wight. One of them is Herbert Douglas Fisher, whose widowed mother settled in Lockerley, a village near Romsey, north of Southampton. Herbert was born in London into a well-to-do family and was sent to school in Oxford and the Isle of Man before becoming a pottery manager in Staffordshire. A member of the Communist Party, he joined the International Brigades in December 1937.

Until now, the official record says that, having served in the 15th Brigade's Sanidad (medical service) from 22 April 1938, Herbert Douglas Fisher was wounded in July at the Ebro, where he was a stretcher-bearer. He was then supposed to have spent time in several hospitals, including one at Vich from 10 August to 25 October, before dying in the following month.

'I was always sceptical about this,' says Alan Lloyd, 'not least because Herbert was a fairly prolific letter writer, especially to his mother, and his final letter to her was in late February 1937.'

Then, searching through the 'Moscow Archive' of International Brigade records, Lloyd came across a questionnaire (biografía de militantes) filled in by Herbert's close namesake, John Herbert Fisher, a commercial traveller from London, though born in Exeter, who had arrived in Spain in February 1938.

These questionnaires are particularly important because the details are filled in by the Brigaders themselves, and not, as often can be the case,

inaccurately by a clerk on a card index,' Alan explains. 'From the completed questionnaire we find that it was John Herbert who was a stretcher-bearer and was wounded by shrapnel in the left arm at the Ebro on 31 July, later spending time in three hospitals, including Vich, from 10 August to 25 October.' John returned home in December 1938 with the rest of the British Battalion.

Interestingly it was not only John Herbert who was confused with Herbert Douglas. American volunteer Harry Fisher, who fought with the Lincoln Battalion, wrote in his memoir, 'Comrades: Tales of a Brigadista in the Spanish Civil War' (University of Nebraska Press, 1998): 'One day [in 1938] a huge package was delivered to me from England. I opened it wondering who in England could have sent it. I spoke to Johnny Power [who commanded one of the British Battalion's companies], who told me that there was an Englishman named Harry

'When [Alan Lloyd] began researching the Hampshire volunteers, almost nothing was known about Herbert.'

[Herbert] Fisher who had been killed some months earlier. Johnny had known him, and said he was a good comrade, and, no doubt about it, he would have wanted me to keep the package.'

The final and decisive piece of evidence about Herbert Fisher's death is contained in a letter to Janie, his mother, from John Penman, a Fife miner who had travelled out to Spain and over the Pyrenees with Herbert. Penman had been taken prisoner at Calaceite on 31 March 1938, and wrote to Janie a year later. He said that when he joined

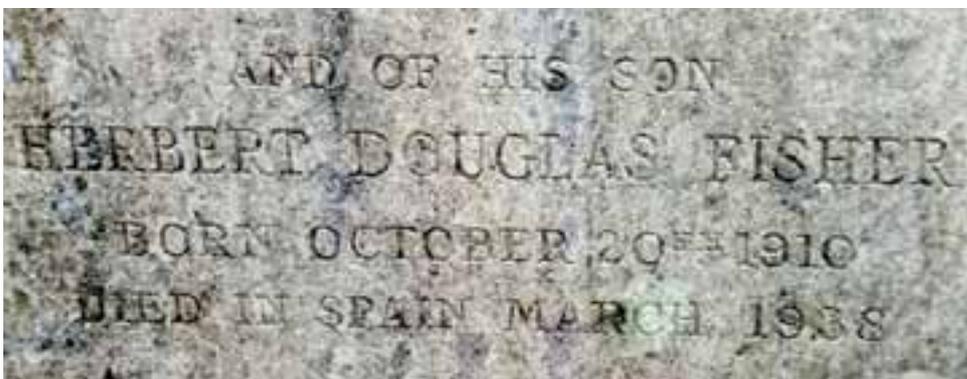


the British Battalion earlier that month he made enquiries about Herbert 'from some of the fellows who knew him, and was told by several he had been killed somewhere between Belchite and Caspe between 10 and 17 March. Nobody could tell me how he died as no one was actually with him.'

Alan Lloyd recalls that when he began researching the Hampshire volunteers, almost nothing was known about Herbert. 'I had a massive stroke of luck when I decided to locate the local know-it-all in Lockerley – as every village has one – to see if they might remember Janie and the family, and where to get information on Herbert.'

Alan continues: 'This person put me on to the village postmaster, who in turn put me in touch with a woman in north London, who had all the letters. Apparently her mother had had the job of clearing out Hamdown, Janie's house, after her death and thankfully found the letters, which remained with her and then her daughter Jane until I came calling.'

The letters are now in the Spanish Civil War archives at the Marx Memorial Library in London, and, thanks to Alan Lloyd's detective work, a confusing tale has been disentangled.



◀ **DISCOVERED:** Memorial inscription for Herbert on the Fisher family gravestone in St Nicholas' Church, Brockenhurst. There is no date for the inscription. Previously unknown, the memorial was recently found by Alan Lloyd in the course of his research.

My time as a medic in war-torn Spain



DAVE CHAPPLE, secretary of the Somerset Association of Trades Councils, has written a celebration of Keith 'Andy' Andrews (right), published this year. Andrews, a veteran of the Royal Army Medical Corps, arrived in Spain in September 1936, serving there until March 1938. After the war he resumed hospital work, settling in Taunton in 1955, where he died in 2008, aged 101. In 2006 Chapple interviewed Andrews about his life as a political and trade union activist and anti-fascist. This is an edited version of the part of the interview dealing with his time in Spain.



Can you tell me your memories of where you were and what made you decide to go to Spain?

I was working at Queen Charlotte Maternity Hospital in Hammersmith, and I didn't like the job very much. I was inspired by a talk given by Ralph Fox, and I decided to go to Spain. So I went up to town. They were very pleased that I called, and within five days I was away.

Do you remember any big send-off at Victoria station for you?

No, we went by road; started off from Trafalgar Square; went by road all the way, just one vehicle, an ambulance. There was a Jewish chap who was driving, called Cohen. There couldn't have been more than four of us.

Barcelona was your first port of call when you got to Spain. Did you stay there long?

No, I think we moved off (to Grañén) pretty well the same day or the next day. I remember I was at the nurses flat that they (Spanish Medical Aid Committee) had in Barcelona. I had 70 quid on me, saved up mostly from my RAMC (Royal Army Medical Corps) Reserve pay. I said to this chap, he was in charge, seemingly, well, this will be no use to me now, and I never saw him again.

What was at Grañén? Was there an operating theatre?

It was a private house, and what was the operating theatre must have been a bar.

Who were the doctors that you came into contact with?

Kenneth Sinclair-Loutit, Godfrey Allen, Alex Tudor Hart, Reginald Saxton. The name of Dr Edward Barsky rings a bell, and Dr (Moisés) Broggi, Spanish, a very nice guy, spoke good English, very efficient and thorough too, in charge of the *équipe* at Grañén. One place we

took over for a field hospital was a café – we had the first floor! The Spanish Civil War medical teams were excellent; I don't think we lost a single patient.

Mainly laparotomies were performed, exploring in the abdomen and operations. As far

'We just worked; whatever had to be done was done. You mostly slept where you could, which was generally on the floor. The only time I slept in a bed was when I was sick myself!'

as I remember they had a 100 per cent success. What happened to them after they left us, of course, we don't know. We did a lot of the sterilising of the medical instruments.

Tell me about the time you were jailed in Spain.

I was at Grañén and these two bods, I was pretty busy at the time, they came by. I walked away from them without saluting and I said: 'Oh shit!', and of course I was reported for that. They were dressed in officer uniforms, but what rank they were I wouldn't know. Alexander Tudor Hart, our doctor, and this chap that I thought was a commissar, said: 'Well, we must make an example', so they gave me seven days of detention.

We never saluted anybody, I mean our chief, Tudor Hart, was an officer, but we had never saluted. I don't know why these two were there, actually. They had been walking about for some days.

I came out from there and I was covered with lice from the other two prisoners in there with me, and every time they scratched, I scratched (laughs). When I finished the seven days I went down to the river. I stripped off, and I took some clothes with me, and I got in the river and the old clothes floated down the river and I put the fresh ones on.

You were in Spain for 18 months. You probably turned your hand to other things as well.

I did the things that I thought I could do: I went out once and gave a talk on hygiene to the troops, the British Battalion. I did a bit of nursing when necessary. You'd get a batch in, some would have to stay in two or three nights and I would go in and do a night shift. I used to assist in the theatre. I drove an ambulance once or twice in Valencia.

Were there occasions when you and your patients and fellow workers were in danger from bombs?

We were bombed several times. I remember one day, it was early morning, and I got soap and a towel. There was a brick wall, quite a length, at the back of the building we were in. There was a stream at the side of it, so I went down there. It was quite an open space, and further down on the left was some transport.

Suddenly I heard this plane. I looked up, and there were these Italian fighters, and they had a habit of using hand grenades, throwing hand grenades out, so I thought: 'Hello, what's this?' I could hear the beginning of the machine-gun, so I hopped over the wall, and cuddled up against it, and the bullets were hitting it and into the little stream.

I think it was Dr Allen, who was in one of the rooms on the first floor, and he'd been watching me through the window, and, when he saw what

was happening, he dived out of the way and the bullets went right through the middle of the window.

Did the Germans and Italians target hospitals?

Obviously, although our place wasn't marked. Whether there was an ambulance there or not, but it was the transport at the side of the field that attracted them.

In your time in Spain I think you had one or two breaks.

I had a bad bout of tummy trouble. I went home for a fortnight and I came back before the fortnight was up. And later on I had another dose, and went home again; no girlfriend left behind, I went home to mother in Willesden, actually.

You mentioned one time when you worked for 48 hours at one stretch. Was that during a battle?

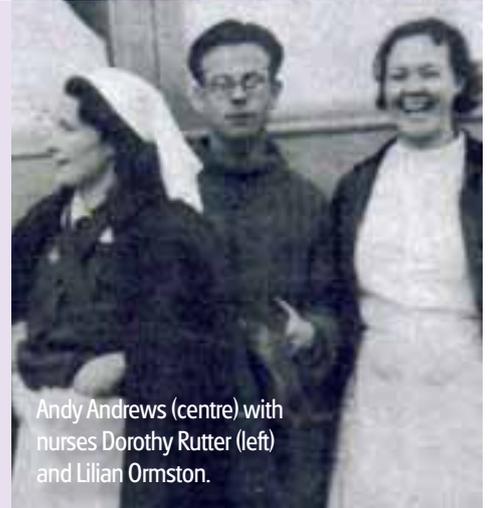
I think that was at Teruel. At the time I was seriously thinking of joining the battalion. I don't know what would have happened, because I went without a rifle or anything. Anyway, it worked out alright where I was.

We had no stretchers. I don't think the men had any first aid kit at all. It wasn't a battle; they were shelling us. I only ever saw one tank. But mostly we were cut off from the front; we didn't know what was happening in the war itself.

I remember there was a skirmish going on and there was this chap from our Dean Street cell. One man was injured. I don't know what

Brewing up while sterilising

Andy Andrews' main job in Spain was to keep all the medical equipment sterile. American nurse Esther Silverstein remembered his hard work and attention to detail. 'He operated five or six primus stoves at once, all filled with gasoline, on top of these sat pressure cookers and in each pressure cooker lay a metal drum containing supplies being sterilised. From this unit Andrews supplied us with the laparotomy sheets, sponges, towels, dressing gloves, gowns and masks. He had one primus stove which always had a tea kettle "on the boil", and from him I learned to drink strong tea with milk in it.'



Andy Andrews (centre) with nurses Dorothy Rutter (left) and Lilian Ormston.

rank he held, but I always remember when I got near enough to him, he was shouting: 'Anybody who turns back will be shot.' Luckily I had bandages with me, so I did up his leg, and I thought: 'Where am I?' I can't leave him, so I've got to turn back. So I shouted to him: 'I've got to take this chappie back.' Oh there was another chap who came over and we armed him up – of course there were no stretchers – and we handed him over somehow, and shortly afterwards, when it was beginning to get a bit dusk, our battalion was coming back, and Major [Malcolm] Dunbar was in charge.

In any given field hospital, what would be the number of doctors, nurses and ancillary workers such as yourself?

Perhaps six ranks, that is doctors, no more than three nurses, supplemented occasionally by

myself. How the Spaniards in the team were allocated I don't know. There were never more than half a dozen Spaniards there, and of course they never wore uniform. The only time we would see them – I would see them – would be if we sat down for a meal. There was only one other ancillary like myself.

We just worked; whatever had to be done was done. You mostly slept where you could, which was generally on the floor. The only time I slept in a bed was when I was sick myself!

Was the food adequate?

The only meat I ever saw was horse-meat. There were some vegetables, and a fair amount of bread. We used to get a parcel, occasionally, from home, from the [Spanish Medical Aid]

'I went without a rifle or anything... we had no stretchers. I don't think the men had any first aid kit at all...'

Committee, and that was quite a change: there would be all sorts of goodies in there. We did have plenty of fruit, especially oranges and a fair amount of wine.

When you came back from Spain, was there an International Brigade group locally that you could go along to occasionally?

There was a reception in Willesden, but when I left London I lost touch with everything political completely, till I got called up and went back to Queen Charlotte Hospital.

Dave Chapple's short biography and celebration of Andrews is titled 'Soldier Saving Lives: Keith Howard Andrews' (2021), and can be ordered from: davechapple@btinternet.com



With RMT General Secretary Bob Crow (left) at the 2006 Tolpuddle Martyrs' Festival.



The long shadow of Francoism in Spain



BALTASAR GARZÓN is a former Spanish high court judge who came to fame in Britain when he issued the warrant that led to the arrest in London of former Chilean dictator General Augusto Pinochet on murder and torture charges. In Spain he has been the target of multiple law suits

brought against him by right-wing lawyers, including one for exceeding his powers in launching an investigation into the crimes of Franco. He was suspended as a judge in 2010 and stepped down from office two years later. More recently he has been involved in the defence of Julian Assange against extradition from the UK to the US on espionage charges. Here he writes exclusively for the IBMT.

On 1 December last year the Spanish online newspaper *InfoLibre* published an exclusive and alarming report revealing the existence of a WhatsApp group where high-ranking retired army officers were exchanging messages yearning for the Franco dictatorship. There were calls for a *pronunciamento* – the declaration of a military coup – like the one issued by General Franco on 18 July 1936 that unleashed the Spanish Civil War. Among the messages were gems such as proposals to shoot 26 million *hijos de puta* (bastards) – of whom I’m probably one. Others wanted to ‘remove the cancer’ or ‘repeat history’, all of them obvious references to Franco’s uprising.

What’s worrying is that, 45 years after the death of the dictator, the embers of Francoism are still alight in Spanish society. If anything, the situation is getting worse. The sort of people I’m referring to have long been represented in parliament, but now they flaunt their ideas with no inhibitions. Macarena Olona, for example, a member of the Congress of Deputies from the

political wing of Francoism, had no qualms in acknowledging in parliament that the members of the WhatsApp group were all ‘one of us’. What she meant is her political party, Vox, the far-right grouping that has split from the Popular Party.

Emergence

Frankly, I’m deeply worried by the emergence and rise of the extreme right and neo-fascism. This is a key theme in my latest book*. It’s beyond belief that the Franco regime still impacts on current politics in Spain, to the extent that there is no consensus on enacting a law of historical memory. Nor can hundreds of families recover the bodies of their loved ones buried in ditches or mass graves. All this should be unacceptable in a democracy.

Francoism in Spain is not dying; it is very much alive. This is because the transition to democracy following Franco’s death in 1975 did not extinguish the embers of the regime. They are now being stoked by the crisis we’re living through and by the global rise of neo-fascism.

More than 40 years ago no democrat could have imagined that fascism would re-emerge in Spain. But we must now face reality. Francoism has returned – or rather it never went away, but remained dormant like the plague.

Francoist

A part of the political right in Spain has always been Francoist. Until recently these right-wingers were camouflaged within the Popular Party. But since 2013 they have had their own party, Vox. In Germany and Italy the fascists came to power in the same way that the neo-fascists of the twenty-first century are now attempting – via democracy. That’s why democracy is not the antidote to fascism. Instead we must strengthen human rights

‘45 years after the death of the dictator, the embers of Francoism are still alight in Spanish society. If anything, the situation is getting worse.’

as a defence against these totalitarian forces that threaten to take over and impose their ideas and aims on our institutions.

A comment such as ‘Shoot 26 million bastards’, spoken by someone from the military, even if retired, cannot be brushed aside, as many are doing. Especially in these times when neo-fascism has resurfaced newly fortified, words like these should end up in the courts and deserve a strong official rebuke. As someone who considers himself among the 26 million, I have asked King Felipe VI to speak out and dissociate himself from

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these wretched soldiers, who I hope do not represent the army. But at the time of writing these lines, I'm still awaiting a response from the king.

It's not just me who is deeply troubled by the rebirth of Francoism. Recently the Royal Spanish Academy published the latest 'Diccionario de la Lengua' (Dictionary of the Spanish language), in which around 2,500 new words have been added. They include *fascistoide* – a person who tends to fascism or authoritarianism – and *parafascista* – something that has a similarity to fascism. In these words we hear an echo of the political and social reality currently being experienced in Spain. Words that should be in disuse, words from the twentieth century such as *fascista*, serve as a building block to create new words that should not even exist in 2021. All this reflects the political and social regression of a democratic society to its Francoist origins.

Civil war

Incredibly, more than 80 years after the end of the civil war there has been no proper reconciliation in Spanish society. And over 40 years since the return to democracy, the country as a whole has not shaken off its dictatorial past. The Spanish right is still split between a democratic right and a hard right that openly forges links with extreme right-wing movements that have emerged in other European countries. A dark past is entrenched in Spain.

More than ever, it's essential that the Spanish government passes its proposed new Democratic Memory Law. The main purpose of the law is the recognition of all those people who for political or ideological reasons suffered violence or persecution in the period from the start of the civil war in 1936 until the adoption of the Spanish Constitution in 1978.

This new law – which is still at draft stage – is necessary to restore the dignity and honour of hundreds of victims who have not seen a robust and definitive acknowledgment from the Spanish state that leaves no doubt about who were the victims and who were the executioners. Special mention therefore must be made of the provision in the future legislation that would nullify all the sentences and fines issued during the civil war and dictatorship by Franco's repressive state organs, and these, in turn, would be declared illegitimate.

The people who are the face of Francoism in Spain today do not hide their longing for the old style of politics. They refuse to try to understand the plurality of our country or, from a human perspective, the difficult challenges of a phenomenon such as immigration. Vox has 52 seats in the Congress of Deputies, and every day these representatives make things more difficult

not only in parliament but also for coexistence in Spain as a whole.

The Franco regime, far from disappearing, casts a very long shadow across Spain. The current socialist government succeeded in exhuming Franco from the Valle de los Caídos on 24 October 2019. This was done, in accordance with the 2007 Historical Memory Law, in the presence of the country's senior law officer, Minister of Justice Dolores Delgado. Attention has now turned to the properties accumulated by the dictator's family, which in some cases should belong to the Spanish state, such as the Pazo de Meirás palace near La Coruña.

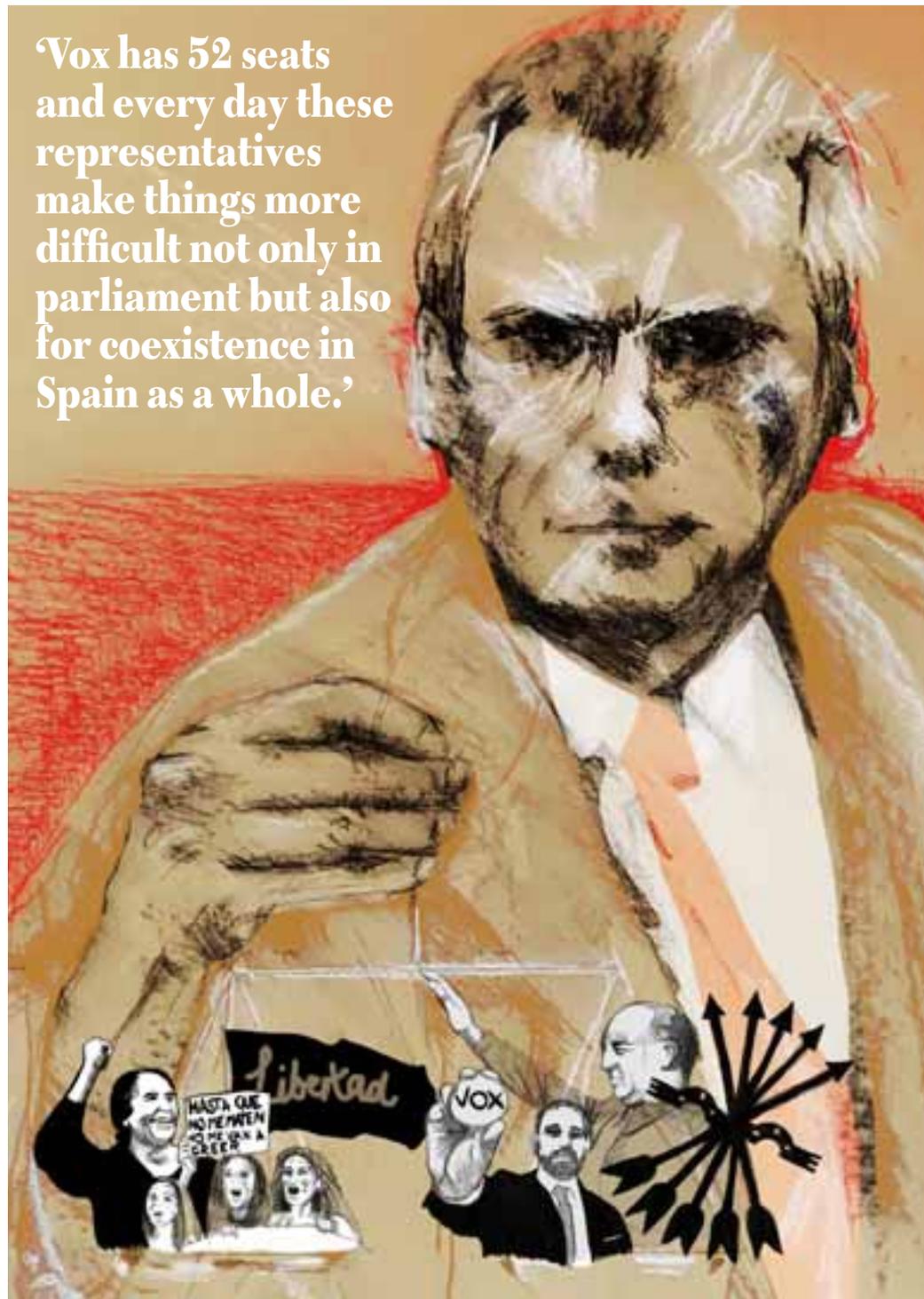
The government's actions might lead us to think that clear progress is being made in recovering the memory of the defeated and of the

victims of Francoism. However, these moves are being opposed by a shameless and dangerously obstructive Francoist ultra-right. The existence of this ultra-right makes it impossible to conclude that truth, justice and reparation for the victims will be an on-going and lasting project – and one, moreover, that will ensure these things never happen again. As such, the fundamental principles of democracy in Spain are under threat.

Text translated by Jim Jump. Illustrations by Sarah Finke.

** 'La Encrucijada: Ideas y valores frente a la indiferencia' (Crossroads: Ideas and values in the face of indifference) published in Spanish by Carena, 2020.*

'Vox has 52 seats and every day these representatives make things more difficult not only in parliament but also for coexistence in Spain as a whole.'





Cayetana
Lozano Díaz.



Jimmy Jump.

Falling in love with a Spaniard and Spain

A new Spanish Civil War memoir by James R 'Jimmy' Jump profiles an International Brigader whose life was transformed by the war. Previously unpublished, 'The Fighter Fell in Love' is a sensitive and vivid account of the author's experiences. It features a dozen of Jump's poems, as well as a foreword by fellow Merseyside-born veteran Jack Jones and a preface by renowned Spanish Civil War historian Paul Preston. His son and IBMT Chair **JIM JUMP** writes...

Jimmy arrived in Spain with a head start. Having learnt Spanish at Wallasey Grammar School, he was one of the few volunteers from Britain who could talk freely to Spaniards and indeed befriend them. He also had a Spanish fiancée waiting for him in England: Cayetana Lozano Díaz. She had arrived in Southampton in May 1937 as one of the *señoritas* looking after nearly 4,000 refugee children escaping Hitler and Mussolini's terror

bombing campaign in the Basque Country.

Jimmy and Cayetana fell in love in the summer of 1937 while he was a volunteer at homes for the children in the Sussex coastal towns of Lancing and Worthing. He was a reporter for the *Worthing Herald*, and already active in local anti-fascist campaigns. The couple agreed to get married, but Cayetana, from the Basque city of San Sebastián, said she wanted to live in Spain – and Jimmy

decided to join the International Brigades.

From his memoir we sense how the war in Spain is radically changing Jump's life. The journey across the Pyrenees takes the 21-year-old not only to the front line of the fight against fascism, but also sets him on course to becoming an *hispanista*, a scholar of Spanish and the author of several books and textbooks on the Spanish language and culture.

As well as falling in love with a Spaniard, Jimmy is soon smitten with Spain itself. With his journalist's eye for detail, his memoir presents a rounded picture of his fellow anti-fascist fighters, whether British, Irish or Spanish. What did they sing? How did they get rid of lice? Could their craving for tobacco be satisfied? What was the best way of beating the censor?

Along with descriptions of battles and manoeuvres, we encounter the Spaniard who hilariously mimics visiting British dignitaries. Here too is the story of a former British Army deserter and a Spanish village girl who overcome language barriers and red-tape to become man and wife.

We find out what happened when an English Christmas pudding is offered around the table to a Spanish family, and how the author devises a scheme that allows hundreds of thirsty soldiers to have a drink on payday.

But this is also a frank, at times confessional memoir. Jimmy's commitment to the anti-fascist cause remains steadfast. But he comes across others along the way who will challenge his resolve: the disillusioned, the shell-shocked, the grief-stricken and those who fatally fall out of favour with their superiors. Heroics and romanticising are always pushed aside.

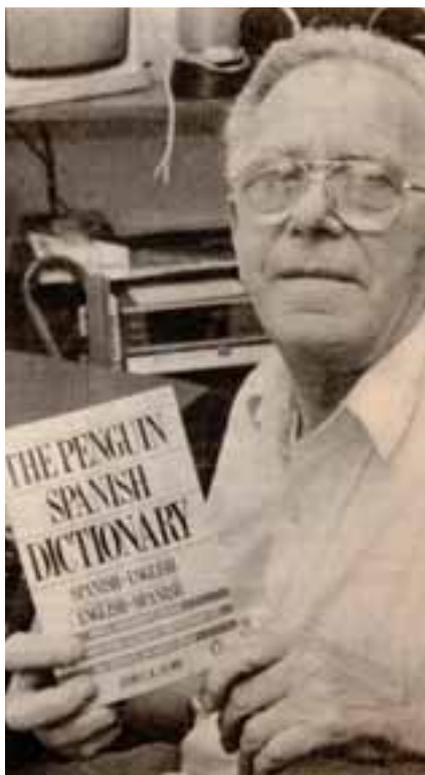
Three executions in particular test him. In May 1938 he has to translate an announcement made to the assembled British Battalion that two Scandinavians accused of 'Trotskyism' have been executed. During the Battle of the Ebro he is troubled by the execution of Maurice Emmet Ryan, who was accused of drunkenly firing his machine-gun on his own comrades, and also by the news that one of his company commanders had shot an 18-year old Spanish recruit who had been discovered hiding behind bushes, with his army identification markings ripped off.

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▲ Jump (right) with sculptor Ian Walters and his maquette for the International Brigade memorial now standing in Jubilee Gardens on London's South Bank. Jimmy was the secretary of the International Brigade Memorial Appeal that raised the money for the memorial.

► In 1990, brandishing 'The Penguin Spanish Dictionary', which he compiled.



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'I felt sure that I could never have shot a Spaniard in cold blood,' he writes. 'Yet, at the same time, I had no idea what I would have done in his place. Would I have tried to reason with him? Would I have turned a blind eye? These questions I could not answer to my satisfaction.'

After working first as paymaster at the International Brigade training base at Tarazona de la Mancha and as a records clerk at the Albacete HQ, the author joins the British Battalion in the spring of 1938. Later that year he takes part in the Ebro offensive and is mentioned in despatches for bravery.

But he admits to being terrified in combat, to being disgusted by the stench of the battlefield, to

'Jump's commitment to the anti-fascist cause remains steadfast. But he comes across others along the way who will challenge his resolve.'

feeling unease with ruthless army discipline, and concludes ashamedly to himself at one point to being 'only intellectually an anti-fascist'.

Many of these themes are developed in his poetry, whether written during the war or decades later, including when he was the 'house poet' at the weekly leftwing *Tribune* magazine.

Jimmy was one of the lucky ones who survived the Battle of the Ebro. He returned home to marry Cayetana and, having also fallen in love with Spain, dedicated himself to teaching and writing about the country and its language. This I describe in an afterword to the book, which I have been proud to edit.

'The Fighter Fell in Love' brings together several drafts and re-edits produced by the author from the mid-1960s up to his death in 1990 at the age of 74. In his preface Paul Preston says that Jump's memoirs 'recreate the camaraderie, idealism and stoicism of his fellow volunteers as well as the misery of defeat. In that regard, they have much in common with another important memoir by a British volunteer, Fred Thomas's "To Tilt at Windmills".'



'The Fighter Fell in Love: A Spanish Civil War Memoir' by James R Jump was published in March by The Clapton Press (theclaptonpress.com).

Giles Tremlett, the Brigaders and the GDR

VICTOR GROSSMAN responds to Giles Tremlett's assessment of International Brigade veterans who went on to hold positions in the East German government, as presented in his recent history of the volunteers.

I'm happy that another English-language book on the International Brigades has been published, by Giles Tremlett, and I look forward to reading it.* But I have already read his comments on volunteers who had careers in the German Democratic Republic (GDR):

'Brigaders took prominent positions... providing seventeen generals, forty colonels and numerous other officers... while a hundred more joined the ranks of various police forces... [M]ore than a dozen senior members of the feared Stasi secret police... [F]or some, those ideals would take them on a journey of oppression that placed them closer, in their behaviour and blind defence of Stalinist communism, to the fascists whom they declared as their enemies than to the democratic Republic that they defended.'

I think that Tremlett, dismayed by the indefensible nastiness of some Stasi methods plus a barrage of exaggeration and distortion

'The GDR turned not to the generals who had subjugated Europe but rather to Resistance fighters and International Brigaders.'

about the GDR even now, 30 years after its demise, misses out on the basic meaning of recent German history.

After the most notorious Nazi killers were skimmed off or had vanished, West Germany learned to acclaim freedom and democracy, construct an array of similar parties (while outlawing troublesome communists), and cry *mea culpa* while supporting any and every

policy of Israel. Otherwise it left the same genocidal forces in power, from Bayer and Daimler to Flick and the Deutsche Bank. And it shamelessly honoured the Condor Legion, Hitler's airborne expeditionary force sent to help Franco.

On 19 November 1936 Lieutenant Johannes Trautloft, who had arrived in Cádiz in August, boasted in his diary after another bombing of Madrid: 'Where the Reds are stationed I see whole blocks of houses collapse. It is certain that anything in a wide radius still able to walk or crawl must be fleeing in panic and terror.'

Major General Johannes Trautloft assumed command of West Germany's Air Force Group South in Karlsruhe on 1 January 1962, replacing retiring Major General Hermann Plocher, once chief of the general staff of the whole Condor Legion, thus winning Franco's *Medalla de la Campaña Española* (Spanish Campaign Medal) and Hitler's *Spanienkreuz* (Spanish Cross). A West German Cross of Merit rounded things off.

In the Condor Legion Heinrich Trettner was adjutant to top bosses Hugo Sperrle and Baron Wolfram von Richthofen, then, in October 1937, commander of the Junkers squadron which bombed Guernica. From 1964 to 1966 he held the West German armed forces' (Bundeswehr) very highest rank, Inspector General.

Werner Mölders, the top Condor Legion ace, could not scramble up the Bundeswehr ladder; he died in 1941. But his memory was honoured; a guided-missile destroyer (built in 1968 in Maine, USA), a battalion base in 1972 and a fighter wing in 1973 were all named 'Mölders'. Only after German unification and Franco's death were these names finally altered. Heinrich Trettner, by now retired, fought angrily to save the name – and tradition.

What about East Germany? After 1945, surviving leftists, with Soviet support, set out to



Minister Erich Mielke, who had also been an International Brigader, though probably without front experience. Sadly, people and organisations with power often over-use it. When shaped by years of anti-fascist struggle, and facing a broad offensive with strong fascist traditions and unrepentant Nazis – like Hitler spy boss Reinhard Gehlen, who was the subversion organiser of West Germany’s BND secret police until 1968 – methods can become repressive and pervasive, possibly worse even than, say, the FBI or Smiley’s M16 ‘Circus’.

One shouldn’t and cannot sympathise with methods that hark back to those of Stalin, although never approaching such ferocity. But one should not fail to realise that International Brigade veterans in public service in the GDR saw their duties as a defence of a society fundamentally anti-fascist from the start, as

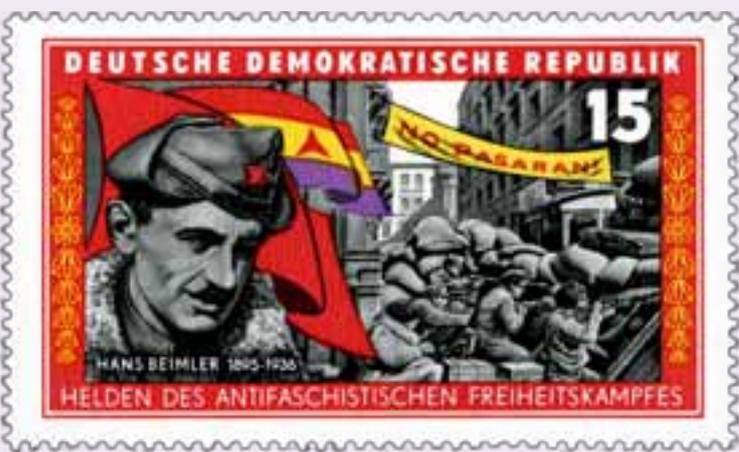
‘For most Brigaders the dividing line in Germany and Berlin was an extension of the front at Madrid’s University City or the Arganda Bridge.’

reflected in its films, plays, school-books, even street names, and which was a key supporter of Algerian liberation, Ho Chi Minh’s Vietnam, Allende’s Chile, anti-Franco guerrillas in Spain and anti-apartheid fighters in southern Africa – while West Germany supported Franco, apartheid and Pinochet.

For most Brigaders the dividing line in Germany and Berlin was an extension of the front at Madrid’s University City or the Arganda Bridge. Some leaders in Spain like André Marty were said to be dogmatic, rough, even brutal. But did blunders or even misdeeds alter the basic meaning of that fight? And, tellingly, after the cause which veterans of the Spanish war supported in the GDR was defeated, we now see fascist forces on the march, banners waving and gaining frightening strength in today’s Germany, east and west.

* ‘The International Brigades: Fascism, Freedom and the Spanish Civil War’ by Giles Tremlett (Bloomsbury, 2020).

Victor Grossman is an American living in Berlin. His latest book, ‘A Socialist Defector: From Harvard to Karl-Marx-Allee’, was published in 2019. He is also the author of ‘Crossing the River: A Memoir of the American Left, the Cold War, and Life in East Germany’ (2003).



▲ Gerhard Kurt Müller’s ‘International Brigades in the Teruel Front’; oil on masonite, 1966-67.

◀ Hans Beimler featured on this GDR postage stamp issued in 1966.

overcome fascist ideology and the cynicism of 17 million Germans in the East and build a socialist state, eliminating profit-taking and poverty. They were opposed from day one by corporations and those people, now back in wealth and power in the West, who were bitterly unreconciled to having been expelled from the East.

They built up a modern army and a conspiratorial network of anti-socialists, revanchists, lamenters of lost privileges and admirers of Western ideals. They wanted the flashy consumer goods enabled by Marshall Plan aid from the US, with which the poorly-endowed East Germany could hardly compete.

To safeguard itself, indeed, to defend its existence, the GDR turned, unlike the West, not to the generals who had subjugated Europe but rather, overwhelmingly, to Resistance fighters and

International Brigaders. Yes, it was they who built up its military forces, headed by Heinz Hoffmann, a battery commissar in the Hans Beimler Battalion who led the unit in Spain after its commander was wounded. Then, near Quijorna during the Battle of Brunete, he too was severely wounded. In the GDR he became a top general, then the Minister of Defence.

And, true enough, they also headed the security service, the Stasi. Its first head was Wilhelm Zaisser, ‘General Gómez’, commander of the XIII Brigade, then of the Albacete base of the International Brigades. He was followed by Ernst Wollweber, who organised seamen and dockers smuggling armaments to Spain and sabotaging Nazi shipments to Franco.

Both men had run-ins with party-head Walter Ulbricht. The third, last (and worst) was Security



'Never More Alive: Inside the Spanish Republic' by Kate Mangan with a preface by Paul Preston and afterword by Charlotte Kurzke (The Clapton Press, 2020).

Kate Mangan: an enigma to the end

Though covering only a year of her life, Kate Mangan's memoir succeeds in combining a moving story of a woman seeking and saving the man she loves with a treasure trove of observations and opinions gathered from her first-hand experiences of life under the daunting conditions of war-time Republican Spain.

Kate Mangan, (née Prideaux Foster) was born into a comfortable middle-class Staffordshire family in 1904, but her life did not follow the well-trodden pathway taken by most girls from her background in those days. Although her father died when she was 14, leaving the family in

'With a jackdaw's zeal she gathers observational gems and describes the famous and the nameless with equal honesty and frequent humour.'

considerable financial difficulties, she was able to attend the Slade Art School in London, after which she worked as a mannequin for a White Russian fashion house in Paris. Her marriage in 1924 to Sherry Mangan, an Irish American writer, led to years of travels, usually poverty-stricken and

often unhappy, though even after their divorce in 1935 they remained friends.

At a party in London the year before, Kate had met the man who changed her life, Jan Kurzke, a German who had fled Hamburg to escape Nazi persecution for his left-wing beliefs. In 1936, when he went to join the International Brigades in Spain, her feelings for him led her to follow, determined not to be hampered by 'lack of money and a complete lack of "Left" political affiliations.'

Spain

Kate was able to stay in Spain during the first year of the civil war through her resourceful efforts in finding press work. Helped by a knowledge of Spanish, she undertook a variety of tasks, both office-based and travelling with correspondents, frequently in dangerous circumstances.

Despite becoming a staunch a supporter of the Republic, in her memoir the personal is usually prioritised over the political. As an inveterate people watcher, she treats us to vignettes of the personalities she encounters throughout her stay. With a jackdaw's zeal she gathers observational gems then, with a discerning pen, describes the famous and the nameless with equal honesty and frequent humour. Where else would we learn, for example, that as she travels between major Republican cities, working and in search of Jan,

the drivers have 'that charming Spanish gesture of rolling one a cigarette and then holding out the open paper for one to lick it together oneself.' Other writers might have ignored an old lady in a hotel who looked like 'a broken-down woman of pleasure' and turned out to be an aristocrat under house arrest. Terrified of air-raids, she was always the first to arrive downstairs in the hall, 'her sordid kimono barely covering her stout nakedness, anxiously screwing her diamonds into her ears.' The dozens of politicians, visiting dignitaries, correspondents and photographers she met are all subject to pithy appraisals. This was certainly so in the case of Gerda Taro, who Kate often found irritating, described as 'a ripe beauty', radiating sex-appeal and 'a model of Parisian sportif chic', though her head was 'a bit too large for her height'.

Enigma

Despite this candid memoir, Kate Mangan remains an enigma. Her daughter, Charlotte Kurzke, comments in the afterword on the difficulties of unravelling her mother's complex and fascinating personality. Pespicious and capable of passionate commitment, Kate nevertheless maintained a degree of detachment that friends found unnerving a times, remarking upon on her characteristic distant gaze, plainly evident in several photographs included in the memoir. Why, I wonder, in the photograph taken



Bullfighter Manuel Benítez Pérez (left), known as 'El Cordobés', greeting Franco at a charity event in June 1965.

After the brutal suppression of the Spanish Republic during the civil war, the country was plunged into a dark dungeon. It only emerged into the light again 40 years later on the death of Caudillo Franco in 1975, and in this important book Duncan Wheeler explores how the country then transformed itself into a monarchical capitalist democracy.

The process of establishing democratic structures after four decades of authoritarianism was a bumpy ride. Old ingrained behaviours, animosities and grievances, and religious and class conflicts infected the newly emerging structures.

The ETA (Euskadi Ta Askatasuna), the armed wing of the Basque separatist movement, waged a bitter guerrilla war against the centrist state and this was followed by an increasingly bitter conflict between the Catalan separatists and central government.

The fratricidal consequences of the civil war were swept under the carpet and there was no real attempt until very recently to come to terms with that past.



Kate Mangan and Jan Kurzke on a Portuguese beach in the summer of 1936.

before the civil war of Kate in Portugal with Jan – the man she risks her life to save – does her elegant pose display such dramatically guarded body language, as if he were a stranger, rather than a lover? While she coolly casts her eyes downwards, he seems to look, not at the camera or at her, but at an inward vision, or perhaps an agenda, of his own. Had they just had a blazing row, or does this photograph anticipate the incredible fact that later, although writing their memoirs side by side, supposedly for publication together, Kate tells her story with a central motif of searching, finding and caring for Jan after he is wounded, whereas Jan doesn't even mention Kate – *at all*? That must have hurt. Without her help, he probably would have lost his leg and possibly his life.

Even at the start of Kate's memoirs, readers

will feel a frisson of foreboding. 'Afraid of a scene', Jan doesn't tell her he is leaving for Spain till the day before. He catches the tram without a backward glance, but she, although 'not interested in politics', is determined to go too, just to be somewhere nearby.

When she misses the chance of seeing him in Barcelona she writes: '...nothing could have been worse or more cruel.' Jan doesn't reply at all to her letters and, when they do actually meet up in Madrid, he says she shouldn't have come because he doesn't want any 'links with what was to him another world'. 'He talked as if he were already dead,' writes a worried Kate. On hearing Jan has been badly wounded, she fights her way through bureaucracy and bombardments to find him, helping with his care, then arranging and

accompanying him on the arduous journey back to Britain.

Return

'Never More Alive' finishes on their return, well before the civil war ended, but letters Kate had written to Milly Bennett, whom she had befriended in Spain, reveal that the heartbreak was not over.

In addition to the stress of living on a shoe-string and dealing with Jan, who 'is jealous over a brief affair she had in Spain', a doctor tells her that she is unlikely to ever be able to have children. 'It depressed me awfully,' she wrote sadly to Milly. However, after a 'slight operation to make my insides normal' she writes again jubilantly in 1938 to say that she is pregnant. 'I am very happy about the baby and nature provides the expectant mother apparently with such a fund of optimism that all worries seem trifling! Jan is sweet to me and I am still very attached to him...' She explains that they will not marry, 'advised by Lord Halifax to avoid the Nazis having any claim on her and the child', but she changes her name to Kurzke for the sake of the baby.

This would be the point at which to leave her story with a potentially happy ending, but more sadness was to follow when the baby died shortly after birth and Jan was interned on the Isle of Man. Charlotte, their daughter born in 1940, informs us in the notes at the end of the memoirs that Jan married a young actress in 1945, and that her mother remained a 'curious mixture of practical and impractical, helplessness and determination, conventional and unconventional' – an enigma to the end.

ANGELA JACKSON

Culture after Spain's dark age



'Following Franco: Spanish Culture and Politics in Transition' by Duncan Wheeler (Manchester University Press, 2020).

the Republican movement was very much out of touch with the realities of ordinary working people.

The author sees parallels between the Spanish transition in its present state and the Britain of the 1970s as 'an age of resurgent environmentalism, economic decline and cultural nostalgia'.

He looks at the phenomenon of popular cultural figures like the bullfighter El Cordobés and the singers Raphael, Julio Iglesias and Lola Flores, who were seen as too close to the Franco regime and thus scorned by the political left, though they had huge popular followings throughout the country. He argues that this simplistic condemnation by the left reveals an elite perspective and a lack of understanding of popular culture.

The gulf between rich and poor in Spain has increased during the post-transition period more than

in other European countries and has led, together with rising unemployment, mass emigration and corruption in both ruling parties: the Spanish Socialist Workers' Party (PSOE) and People's Party (PP), to the rise of popular movements like Podemos. Its ascension, and those of other new political parties, has gone in tandem with the increasingly mainstream rise of feminism in this traditionally male-dominated society, he writes.

In examining the rise and surprisingly rapid waning of Podemos, Wheeler argues that the movement was led by academics who lacked the ability to engage with the working class and rural populations.

Yet this book itself makes no attempt to hide the fact that it is the result of intense academic research and makes no attempt to reach a popular readership. However, while one can hardly accuse a cow of not being a horse, this fact will confine it to a much narrower readership than it deserves.

JOHN GREEN

Wheeler has done a superb job in interpreting this complex process of the Spanish transition through the mirror of its cultural life, while also tackling class and gender issues within this whole process.

Many progressives outside Spain were somewhat surprised that the left did not sweep to power after Franco's death. This is partially explained by the fact that what remained of it after Franco's decimation of

Bringing Irish Brigaders to light

In July 1936 the Irish writer and War of Independence veteran Peadar O'Donnell headed for the seaside village of Sitges, near Barcelona, seeking some peace and quiet to work on a new novel. No such luck! A fortnight later, Franco launched his fascist revolt. 'Salud!' is O'Donnell's eyewitness account of the eve and opening weeks of that war, and of his return visit in September. Unequivocal in his solidarity with the Spanish Republic, he nonetheless criticised some weaknesses and excesses he had observed. The 'orthodox' narratives of the war – whether Catholic, Communist or Orwellian – all would have found aspects of O'Donnell's outspoken account disturbingly irritating. That might explain why 'Salud!' was never republished until this most welcome edition from the Friends of the International Brigades in Ireland.

O'Donnell found communist influence in Barcelona to be very much secondary to that of the anarchists: 'Anarchists talk eagerly of education. They had great plans for overcoming illiteracy. Everybody was eager to read. The need was for schools and still more schools.' Far less appealing to

'Without speaking pejoratively of any of Barcelona's militias, O'Donnell nonetheless viewed their rivalry as an obstacle to creating a disciplined anti-fascist People's Army...'

him, however, was how dogmatically keen those urban anarchists were to rapidly collectivise the countryside, rather than come to terms with the small farmers' own desire for peasant proprietorship on the breaking up of estates. Nonetheless, in his cinematic account of the outbreak of war, his enthusiasm returned to describe as 'a great experience' the sight of armed youths in Barcelona rallying to the defence of the Republic.

In assessing an attempted military offensive, however, O'Donnell became sharply critical. He joined the ranks of a makeshift army setting out in the direction of Saragossa, which only succeeded in securing a few villages before suffering serious casualties on being repulsed by the fascists: 'The

MANUS O'RIORDAN reviews 'Salud!', Peadar O'Donnell's memoirs of the Spanish Civil War, and a new comprehensive history of the Irish volunteers by Barry McLoughlin and Emmet O'Connor.



collapse of good sense permitted untrained girls to get whisked off their feet towards the front with rifles in their hands, leaving trained men behind. Untrained girls were killed. But this sort of loss was not confined to girls. The Catalan Popular Forces were the world's worst when it came to taking cover. They seemed to think there was something unmanly in availing of such shield as the ground offered.'

Being himself a target of Irish clerical enmity, O'Donnell understood why Spanish Republicans would be sharply anti-clerical. Yet he candidly criticised excesses, such as the anarchist church burning he witnessed in Sitges, while reserving his most scathing comments for an Englishman strutting around while adorned with that church's altar cloth – 'a robust little bigot, typical of Protestant opinion as I encountered it in Spain'.

Back in Barcelona that September, O'Donnell participated in the Anarchist Farmers' Congress, where the voices of real farmers were finally heard. 'Salud!' serves indeed as a healthy reality check to accompany a reading of 'Homage to Catalonia', given George Orwell's uncritical endorsement of both church burning and collectivisation.

Without speaking pejoratively of any of Barcelona's militias – whether anarchist, POUM or communist – O'Donnell nonetheless viewed their rivalry as an obstacle to creating a disciplined anti-fascist People's Army, and he noted a growing public awareness that effective government action was a prerequisite for the Republic's defence. On a visit to Madrid, he further observed that while 'in Barcelona the Anarchists were the central driving force, in Madrid Communist influence was more in evidence'. This was to a large extent due to 'the formation of the 5th Regiment, regarded as a Communist achievement rapidly making a name for

itself as a very fine fighting machine'. Public opinion was accordingly affected: 'If Communism was the enemy-in-chief in the eyes of the Fascists then it clearly was a fighting formation to which anti-Fascists should rally.' So 'Salud!' is also O'Donnell's homage to communist Madrid, in addition to being a homage to Catalonia that provides a far more realistic portrayal of the complexities of that region than the book which bears that name.

'In Spanish Trenches' is co-authored by Barry McLoughlin and Emmet O'Connor, and is dedicated to their fathers: 'Captain James Joseph McLoughlin, Cavalry Corps, Irish Army; Sergeant Peter O'Connor, Abraham Lincoln Battalion, 15th International Brigade'.

Drawing on Irish, British, German, Russian and Spanish archival sources, they sum up: 'Two hundred and forty-seven Irish-born men fought in the International Brigades. Only 62 went directly from Ireland and 134 went from Britain. The Irish contingent among the Canadian volunteers (31) is surprisingly high and the number travelling from the United States (12) relatively low.' And, indeed, their impressive use of Canadian records has brought many previously unrecorded Irish volunteers to light.

Warts and all

Over the course of its 400 pages, this comprehensive history provides a warts and all narrative. The authors wear their ideological biases on their sleeves, but this does not impede their presentation of the facts of International Brigade history. It is particularly welcome that an issue with a 2014 book by Barry McLoughlin, 'Fighting for Republican Spain 1936-38', has now been resolved. In my January 2015 review, I objected to the charge that British Battalion commander Sam Wild's execution of Maurice Emmett Ryan, for drunkenly firing his machine gun in the direction of his own side in August 1938, was an example of 'sinister assassination' and 'a semi-judicial murder'.

This book makes no such charge and the authors provide a balanced presentation: 'Emmett Ryan could hardly plead extenuating circumstances, before officers he had provoked time and again, and it seems certain that he was blind drunk during the action, either asleep or firing the Maxim inaccurately, possibly in the wrong direction. In any

case, as a sergeant, he was in charge of the gun. The incident happened during the assaults on Hill 481.' The authors add: 'If a soldier, drunk on duty, fired on his comrades, there is every likelihood that he would have been shot out of hand by an officer in the Allied armies in both world wars. Swift retribution to 'steady the troops' had to be seen to be done.'

At Jarama, on 27 February, the unsupported Lincolns were ordered to undertake a senseless

'The authors wear their ideological biases on their sleeves, but this does not impede their presentation of the facts...'

assault. The authors describe how Lincoln commander Robert Merriman pleaded in vain with Brigade commander Vladimir Čopić to call off the attack. Brigade HQ dispatched British lieutenants Clifford Wattis and Dave Springhall 'to ensure that the Americans went "over the top" just before noon'. It was a slaughter, with both Merriman and Springhall wounded at the outset. One hundred and twenty-seven Lincolns were killed, including Irish platoon commissar Charlie Donnelly and three other Irishmen. This is but one example of the superbly detailed military chapters of 'In Spanish Trenches'.

The authors point out that in July 1937 'only the propagandists could believe that Brunete was a decisive Republican victory', and they detail the cost. Almost 800 had been killed. The fatalities were

highest in the 15th Brigade (293). The British Battalion lost 85 per cent of its strength. At 167, the number of missing, including deserters, was highest in the American and British Battalions. Eight Irishmen were killed and at least 13 wounded.

Both Frank Ryan and Steve Nelson of the Lincolns were tasked with re-building the British Battalion, and they proposed that the Wexford Republican Peter Daly be appointed its new commander. During the August 1937 battle of Quinto, the British were ordered to take Purburell Hill. The authors relate: 'Daly was told it was lightly held by Merriman who ordered the assault. Contrary to this unfounded supposition, typical of Čopić, the mound was topped by concrete bunkers, trenches and machine-gun nests, but no artillery support was summoned.' Daly was fatally wounded in the stomach.

Fell

When darkness fell, Paddy O'Daire, Daly's successor as British Battalion commander, withdrew his troops. When artillery support was finally forthcoming, O'Daire launched an attack at dawn. The authors continue: 'The trenches were taken in a classic charge at 6pm. Čopić, obtuse and as careless of men's lives as ever, criticised O'Daire for pulling back his troops after the first failed assault. The wily Donegal captain took a copy of British Army Field Regulations from his pocket, proving that he was correct in taking the decision to await artillery.'

With Quinto fully conquered, 'there were spontaneous killings of fascist snipers by Americans and some officers were shot'. The many other Lincolns concerned at such revenge killings, including Irish syndicalist Pat Read, were told, as

justification, that 'the fascists killed all Internationals after capture'. This would indeed be the fate of Merriman himself, the 15th Brigade's Chief of Staff during the Aragon retreats of March 1938, who, together with Brigade commissar Dave Doran, was murdered on 2 April following their capture by Spanish fascist troops.

Captured

Frank Ryan and the British Battalion troops captured by Italian fascists on 30 March, instead of being shot, were sent to San Pedro concentration camp. Franco, however, decided to put Ryan on trial for his life. Pioneering research in the Spanish archives provided McLoughlin and O'Connor with the full transcript of both the June 1938 interrogation of Ryan and his trial. They further sourced more damning evidence concerning the 15th Brigade's Chief of Supplies, Captain Wattis, described as 'the most prominent British deserter'. The Duke of Alba, Franco's representative in London, was able to report in May 1938 that Wattis had been urging that Frank Ryan, described as 'a leader of the Irish revolt', should 'in no circumstances be repatriated or allowed to get away'.

The authors also address the issue of Ryan's final years in wartime Germany and the charge of collaboration against him. In his 1980 biography, Seán Cronin published Ryan's letters to the Irish Minister in Madrid, where he pledged his own support for de Valera's policy of wartime neutrality, how he advised the Germans of Ireland's adherence to that policy and how he spoke out against German actions that might undermine the de Valera government.

McLoughlin and O'Connor concur with Cronin, and write: 'We believe that Frank Ryan was not a collaborator but rather an adviser to German foreign office experts', a welcome conclusion at the close of this comprehensive history.

It is not of course impossible that, in years to come, some more names of Irish International Brigaders could yet emerge. While these would add individual detail to the authors' narrative, its essential character need not alter. 'In Spanish Trenches' is such a definitive history of Irish involvement in defence of the Spanish Republic that it will surely stand the test of time.

'Salud! An Irishman in Spain' by Peadar O'Donnell (1937, republished by Friends of the International Brigades in Ireland, 2020) is available to order from Connolly Books, Dublin (€15), or Calton Books, Glasgow (£14).

'In Spanish Trenches: The Mind and Deeds of the Irish Who Fought for the Republic in the Spanish Civil War' by Barry McLoughlin and Emmet O'Connor (University College Dublin Press, 2020).



IRISH SECTION: Back row from left, Paul Burns (US), Joe Rehill (US), Johnnie Power (Waterford) and Charles Coleman (Cork). Front row from left: Peter O'Connor (Waterford), Michael Kelly (Ballinasloe), T Hayes (Dublin) and Jim Reagan (Cork).



Keeping alive the memory of the Australian volunteers

JIM MINTER, a member of the IBMT and the Australian Friends of the International Brigades, provides the following report of the commemoration event held in Canberra at the end of last year. A total of 70 Australian Brigaders and medical volunteers travelled to Spain to fight fascism.

Every year, on the first Sunday in December, the Australian Friends of the International Brigades (AFIB) holds its commemoration and picnic at the Australians in the Spanish Civil War Memorial in Canberra. The memorial was built in 1993 and was unveiled by Lloyd Edmonds, Australia's last known surviving International Brigade volunteer, as recorded in the IBMT volunteers' database.

The memorial was the result of an incredible amount of hard work by a dedicated group of private volunteers, with support from committed politicians and members of the labour and union movement. The memorial is flanked by three olive trees that were planted by the Spanish ambassador at the time of the unveiling.

Unfortunately, the ravages of time have seen the passing of many of the initial creators of the memorial. But the sense of duty and dedication that

drove the volunteers who served in Spain and also those who worked tirelessly to support the Spanish Republic from Australia, will always be remembered

‘There are so many with no direct connection to the International Brigades who continue to understand the significance of the cause.’

and honoured at this memorial. Floral tributes and information boards are regularly placed by the AFIB to show to passers-by that it is a living memorial.

Despite Covid-19, last year saw a good turn-out

▲ AFIB member Luisa Espinosa delivering a speech by the Australians in the Spanish Civil War Memorial in Canberra, installed in December 1993.

of about 40, which included a very gratifying surge of participation by young people who were attending for the first time.

The commemoration event consisted of speeches by Luisa Espino and Humphrey McQueen, who laid wreaths, followed by individual flower-laying by all present. During these proceedings, Brian Hungerford played Galician pipes. It was an extremely moving ceremony, which was then followed by the Friends' picnic, where excellent food was shared in good spirit.

It constantly amazes this writer that there are so many people, with no direct or familial connection to the Spanish Civil War or the International Brigades, who continue to understand the significance of and relate to the meaning of the duty and the sacrifice of the cause. We are all united in our understanding of our duty to never forget.

● *The AFIB is working hard to increase understanding of the significance of the Spanish Civil War and the commitment and sacrifice of the International Brigades. For more information contact: afibcbr@gmail.com.*

● *Material on the Australian volunteers and their experiences is available in the Australia & the Spanish Civil War exhibition on the Australian National University website.*



Become a Friend of the IBMT and help preserve the memory and spirit of the International Brigades

You can help make a special contribution to our essential work by becoming a Friend of the IBMT.

Donate more than £50 a year and your name will be listed as a Friend of the IBMT in our magazine. If you dedicate your donation to a particular International Brigade volunteer, this will be published along with your name. We'll also send you an exclusive Friend of the IBMT badge (above) to wear with pride.

● Send a cheque for £50 or more made out to the IBMT, along with your name and address, to: IBMT, 37a Clerkenwell Green, London EC1R 0DU. If you are a UK taxpayer and wish to make a Gift Aid

declaration with your donation, you can request a form from admin@international-brigades.org.uk

● Alternatively, click the Donate button on our website (www.international-brigades.org.uk) and make a donation of at least £50 via PayPal. If you do this, please email admin@international-brigades.org.uk to notify us.

Thank you for your support. ¡No pasarán!



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

Choose your IBMT t-shirt



The IBMT has a range of new t-shirt designs highlighting the contributions of volunteers from Ireland, Scotland and Wales (below).

We also have a t-shirt featuring the iconic emblem of the International Brigades, in a variety of colours (left).

All t-shirts are on sale for £20 (plus £3.99 p&p) in a range of sizes (S-5XL) and are made from ethically sourced cotton.

The t-shirts are produced in partnership with specialist radical apparel outfitter Red Molotov. All proceeds from sales help fund our vital commemorative and educational work.

To place an order online go to the Shop page of the IBMT website:
www.international-brigades.org.uk/catalog

