



# ¡NO PASARÁN!

International Brigade Memorial Trust ● 3-2019 ● £5



**Bob Doyle and the Connolly Column**

# INTERNATIONAL BRIGADE MEMORIAL TRUST



Original British Battalion banners on display at the Marx Memorial Library, venue for this year's IBMT Annual General Meeting.

## ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING and weekend of events and activities in London

The IBMT's Annual General Meeting will take place on Saturday 5 October 2019 in the Marx Memorial Library, 37a Clerkenwell Green, London EC1R 0DU as part of a weekend programme of commemorative, educational and social events. All members are warmly invited to attend and take part.

### Provisional programme

#### Friday 4 October

- 6.45pm: Draw for the IBMT's No Pasarán Raffle; in the Marx Memorial Library.
- 7pm-8pm: Exclusive screening of video footage of the Arcola Theatre's acclaimed production of the musical 'Goodbye Barcelona' about the International Brigades; introduced by its co-writer Karl Lewkowicz; free; in the Marx Memorial Library.

#### Saturday 5 October

- 11am-12.30pm: Talks by Richard Baxell (author of 'Unlikely Warriors: The Extraordinary Story of the Britons who Fought In the Spanish Civil War') about the International Brigade volunteers from London and by David Rosenberg (author of 'Rebel Footprints: A Guide to Uncovering London's Radical History' and co-editor of *Jewish Socialist*) about the Jewish volunteers from Britain; chaired by Meirian Jump, Marx Memorial Library Archivist & Library Manager; free; in the Marx Memorial Library.
- 2pm-4pm: The IBMT's AGM in the Marx Memorial Library (see agenda and notice of elections below).
- 4.30pm-5.30pm: Screening of 'Voices from a Mountain' (David Leach, 2001), about British volunteers in the Spanish Civil War and the re-discovery of a memorial to members of the 15th Brigade killed at the Battle of the Ebro in the

summer of 1938; free; in the Marx Memorial Library.

- From 6pm: Informal social and buffet upstairs at the Three Kings, 7 Clerkenwell Close, London EC1R 0DY; with open mic; £10 payable on the door.

#### Sunday 6 October

- 11am-1pm: Spanish Civil War history tour of the East End led by historian and guide David Rosenberg; meet at entrance to Shadwell DLR station and finish at Whitechapel tube station; £8 payable on the day; booking essential: [secretary@international-brigades.org.uk](mailto:secretary@international-brigades.org.uk)

### AGM agenda

- (1) Chair's opening remarks
- (2) Apologies for absence
- (3) Approval of minutes of the 2018 AGM and matters arising
- (4) Executive Committee's report
- (5) Financial report
- (6) Election of Executive Committee members
- (7) Any other business
- (8) Date and place of next AGM
- (9) Chair's closing remarks

### Notice of elections and AGM agenda items

Nominations are invited for candidates to fill five vacancies on the Executive Committee. Should five or more IBMT members accept nomination, a ballot

will be held among members attending the AGM.

Four vacancies arise because Megan Dobney, Christopher Hall, Charles Jepson, Jim Jump and Manuel Moreno will have completed their terms of office at the AGM. They must therefore step down and an election, in which they are permitted to stand, along with other IBMT members, will take place. The four elected members will serve for three years.

In addition, Mary Greening has announced that she will be retiring from the Executive Committee at the AGM, one year before her term of office expires. She will be replaced by the candidate receiving the fifth highest number of votes in the ballot. This person will serve for one year.

All IBMT members may nominate fellow members to serve on the Executive Committee. Nominations must be made in writing and received by the Secretary (see below) by 8am on 16 September 2019. The names of candidates for election will be published on the IBMT website in advance of the AGM. Proposed items for agenda item (7) must be received in writing by the Secretary by 8am on 28 September 2019. Send nominations and proposed agenda items by email (these will be acknowledged) to: [secretary@international-brigades.org.uk](mailto:secretary@international-brigades.org.uk) or by post to: IBMT Secretary, 37a Clerkenwell Green, London EC1R 0DU.

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



Photo: Richard Baxell

Bob Doyle and the Connolly Column

◀ See page 5 for news of a memorial plaque in Dublin for Bob Doyle and page 12 for an appreciation of the Connolly Column of Irish volunteers.

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**Editor** Jim Jump

IBMT, 37a Clerkenwell Green, London EC1R 0DU  
020 7253 8748

chair@international-brigades.org.uk

**International Brigade Memorial Trust**

www.international-brigades.org.uk



▲ The Clapton CFC flag flies over the campsite of July's Tolpudde Martyrs' Festival in Dorset and (right) members of the newly formed women's team squad display the club's colours, including the famous shirt in tribute to the International Brigades and Spanish Republic.

## Clapton CFC and IBMT team up for a memorial to the Newham volunteers

The east London community football club that last year produced a best-selling shirt dedicated to the International Brigades is backing moves to erect a memorial to the local volunteers who went to Spain.

Clapton Community Football Club is working closely with the IBMT on the project, which would see a free-standing memorial in West Ham Park or at some other suitable site in Newham.

At the member-owned club's annual general meeting on 22 June it was agreed to allocate £4,000 for a memorial stone or sculpture to the dozen individuals from the area who served in the International Brigades.

The City of London, which owns West Ham Park, is willing to give approval subject to certain guarantees about maintenance.

Also agreed unanimously at the Clapton CFC AGM was a proposal to produce a banner naming the volunteers from Newham.



West Ham Park: potential site.

IBMT President Marlene Sidaway is liaising with the club on the memorial project and has been involved in the talks with the City of London authorities. Her late partner and International Brigader, David Marshall (1916-2005), lived in Newham, close to West Ham Park, where there is a memorial bench for him.

She said: 'This is a very exciting development and we're delighted that Clapton CFC wants to honour the local anti-fascists who fought in Spain.'



Surname: Jones

First name: James 'Jack'

Other name: Larkin

Place of birth: Liverpool

Year of birth: 1913

## Photos now being added to online biographical list of Brigaders

The IBMT's online database of nearly 2,400 International Brigaders from Britain and Ireland can now also include photos of individual volunteers (for example, Jack Jones, left).

Accessed via the IBMT website, the searchable list contains basic information about each individual, such as name, birthplace and, in the case of more than 500 of them, location of death in Spain.

Photos will gradually be added to these entries, and the IBMT is urging family members and friends to submit photos for inclusion in the database. They should be emailed to: admin@international-brigades.org.uk or sent to: IBMT, 37a Clerkenwell Green, London EC1R 0DU.

The list of volunteers is the result of many years of work by IBMT archivist Jim Carmody, who died in 2016, and historian Richard Baxell, who was the IBMT Chair until October last year. The database can be accessed at [www.international-brigades.org.uk/the-volunteers](http://www.international-brigades.org.uk/the-volunteers).



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.

### International Brigade Memorial Trust

37a Clerkenwell Green, London EC1R 0DU  
020 7253 8748  
admin@international-brigades.org.uk  
www.international-brigades.org.uk  
Registered charity no.1094928

**President** Marlene Sidaway  
president@international-brigades.org.uk

**Chair** Jim Jump  
chair@international-brigades.org.uk

**Secretary** Megan Dobney  
secretary@international-brigades.org.uk

**Treasurer** Manuel Moreno  
treasurer@international-brigades.org.uk

**Ireland Secretary** Manus O'Riordan  
mmanusoriordan@gmail.com

**Scotland Secretary** Mike Arnott  
scotland@international-brigades.org.uk

**Wales Secretary** Mary Greening  
wales@international-brigades.org.uk

**Merchandise Officer** Christopher Hall  
merchandise@international-brigades.org.uk

**Other Executive Committee members**  
Pauline Fraser, Alex Gordon, John Haywood,  
Charles Jepson, Alan Lloyd, Dolores Long,  
Tosh McDonald

**Founding Chair** Professor Sir Paul Preston

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

## NEWS

### Scrapbook remembers the Basque children

Refugee Week on 17-23 June was marked by the Marx Memorial Library with the launch of an online exhibition, 'A Scrapbook Tells a Story', about a group of child refugees who found safety in Britain during the Spanish Civil War.

Funded by Islington Council, the digital exhibition contains more than 200 photographs and 70 press cuttings taken from a scrapbook kept by volunteers looking after the children at one of their homes in Worthing, Sussex.

Archivist & Library Manager Meirian Jump said the online presentation showed how British people were mobilised to care for the children. She added: 'The bombing of Basque towns prompted a public outcry, which persuaded a reluctant UK government to allow the children entry, but only on condition that they were cared for entirely by volunteers.'

Jump's own grandmother, Cayetana Lozano Díaz, was one of the *señoritas* who accompanied the nearly 4,000 children from Bilbao to Southampton on the *Habana*, and is pictured in the scrapbook. 'It was at this time that she met



**FLAGS:** The annual reunion lunch of the surviving Basque refugee children took place on 19 May at London's Melia Whitehouse Hotel. The event, which dates back to the 1940s, is always held at the weekend closest to 23 May, the day they arrived in Southampton in 1937.

my grandfather, James R Jump, who volunteered to defend the Spanish Republic by joining the International Brigades.'

To browse the exhibition go to the Marx Memorial Library's website and click on 'Exhibitions & Projects'.

### Memorial bench for two Crewe volunteers

Saturday 4 May saw the unveiling in Crewe Cemetery of a bench to commemorate International Brigade volunteers George Fletcher and Edward McQuade. Both are buried in the cemetery, just a few yards away from the bench that now bears their names.

The memorial is the result of a long and determined campaign by local Labour councillor and IBMT member Joy Bratherton. The ceremony was attended by relatives of the two men, IBMT members and local civic figures, including Laura Smith, Crewe and Nantwich's Labour MP, and Councillor Brian Roberts, the Mayor of Crewe. Also represented were Unite the Union, RMT's Crewe No.1 Branch and ASLEF.

Joy Bratherton said afterwards that George Fletcher and Edward McQuade finally had a proper and fitting recognition of their bravery. 'The volunteers who went to Spain were fighting to uphold democracy and social justice, at a time when governments, including that of the

UK, were actively appeasing fascist dictators.'

Thanking everyone who had made the memorial possible, she added: 'A big shout out has to be

made to Unite's North West Region, and the union's Crewe, Manchester Central, Wharton & Salmesbury and Wigan branches. All made important financial contributions.'



**JOY BRATHERTON:** Thanked unions for their support.





## Dublin honours native son Bob Doyle

Supporters of the International Brigades gathered in Dublin on 6 July for the unveiling of a plaque (above) to International Brigader Bob Doyle (below) near his birthplace at the Cobblestone Bar in North King Street.

The event was organised by Stoneybatter & Smithfield People's History Project in honour of Doyle, who was an Irish republican before serving in the British Battalion of the International Brigades.



Doyle afterwards settled in London, where he worked in Fleet Street and was an activist in the Sogat print

union. He was also a notable political campaigner, including taking part in protests against the Notting Hill race riots of 1958 and opposing the Iraq War of 2003.

In 1993 he starred in the BBC2 Video Diaries documentary 'Rebel Without a Pause', which showed him travelling to Spain to campaign for a memorial at the unmarked mass grave containing the International Brigade and Spanish Republican dead of the Battle of Jarama.



**FRANK PAYS HOMAGE:** Two new plaques to Britons have been unveiled in Spain. Both are the work of sculptor and IBMT member Frank Casey. The memorial to the poet and communist activist John Cornford (left) is in Lopera's Garden of the English Poets and was unveiled on 13 April. Cornford, from Cambridge, was killed just outside Lopera, on the Córdoba front, in December 1936 while fighting in an English-speaking unit in a French battalion of the International Brigades.

The second memorial is to Bob Smillie, from Larkhall, Lanarkshire, and was unveiled on 14 May in Valencia's main cemetery, where he is buried. He died of peritonitis in hospital in June 1937, having been arrested at the French border a few weeks earlier and accused of not possessing identification papers and having unauthorised empty grenades. In Spain Smillie served in Aragón in the militia of the revolutionary POUM party, which was banned following anti-government disturbances in Barcelona in May of that year.



## Aberdeen street art tells a story from 1937

Users of a car park next to Aberdeen's Union Square (above) can now appreciate a mural depicting local International Brigader John Londragan (second from left). It was painted by the Portuguese artist known as Vhils (Alexandre Farto) as part of the city's third annual Nuart Festival earlier this year.

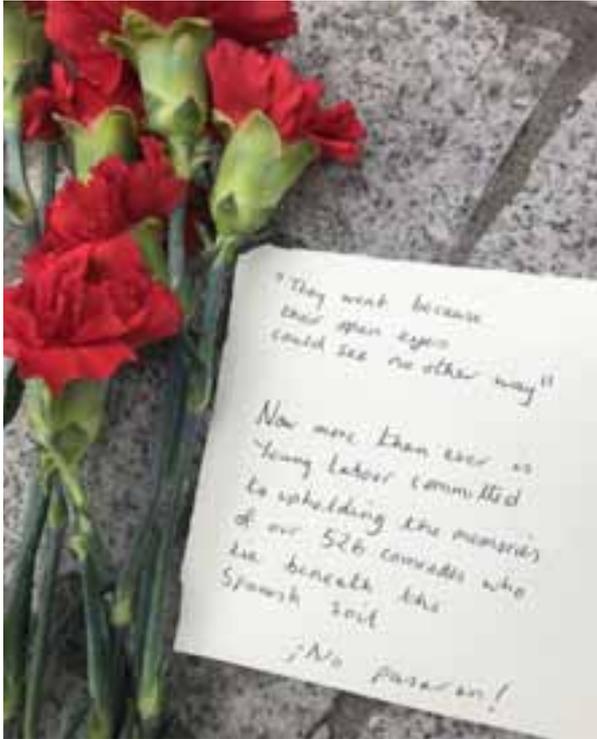
The theme of this year's festival was storytelling, and Vhils wanted to draw attention to the city's links to the Spanish Civil War. The painting of John

Londragan is from a photo (below) taken in Albares, Spain, in 1937 with Canadian-born International Brigade volunteer Peter Fry and the daughters of local shopkeeper Juan Ataro – whom Londragan had befriended in Aberdeen when the Spaniard was serving as a crew member on a Spanish ship.

Widely considered the world's leading celebration of street art, Nuart was founded in Stavanger, Norway, in 2001 and is a showcase for artists from around the world.



# ANNUAL COMMEMORATION



## SPAIN'S LESSON FROM HISTORY FOR TODAY'S TROUBLED TIMES

Hundreds of people gathered on Saturday 6 July at the International Brigade memorial on London's Southbank to hear warnings that the threat of fascism in Britain and throughout Europe was on the rise.

RMT General Secretary Mick Cash said the example set by the International Brigades in fighting fascism in Spain was still relevant today. Trade unions had a special role to play in that fight, especially in challenging fascist, racist or antisemitic sentiments in the workplace.

We should follow the lead set by the volunteers who went to Spain, he added. 'My generation, the current generation, has a duty again to say "not on my watch" and "no pasarán".'

IBMT Secretary Megan Dobney also warned that fascism was again rearing its head. 'We stand here looking to the future,' she said. 'We commit to make sure it never happens again. Fascism is not an historical aberration but a live and dangerous reality.'



**MICK CASH:** Special role for unions in combating fascist ideas.

Other speakers included IBMT Scotland Secretary Mike Arnott, who reported on progress in saving the former International Brigade hospital in Tarancón, the town in which there is a memorial to the Scots who died in the 1937 Battle of Jarama. Hilary Jones, an IBMT activist from Manchester, made an appeal for donations to the IBMT.

Wreaths were laid on behalf of the Spanish embassy, Basque Children's Association, Marx

Memorial Library, Connolly Association, Young Labour and the communist parties of Britain and Spain. Among many other floral tributes were ones for the Abraham

**'My generation, the current generation, has a duty again to say "not on my watch" and "no pasarán".'**

Lincoln Brigade volunteers from the US, the Connolly Column from Ireland, plus Spanish Republican fighters and exiles. Several individual tributes were also laid.

This was followed by a minute's silence and the singing of 'Valley of Jarama', led by Na-mara.

IBMT Chair Jim Jump concluded proceedings with a tribute to Geoffrey Servante, almost certainly the last British International Brigade volunteer, who died in April, just four weeks before his 100th birthday.

The annual commemoration is the highpoint of the IBMT calendar and pays tribute to the 2,500 International Brigade volunteers from Britain and Ireland who fought in the Spanish Civil War of 1936-39. More than 500 of them were killed in the conflict, which saw General Franco triumph with the help of Nazi Germany and Fascist Italy. Britain helped the future dictator by enforcing an arms embargo on the Popular Front government of the Spanish Republic.



**FLOWERS, SPEAKERS AND MUSIC:** Pictured in Jubilee Gardens on 6 July: Héctor Castañada (below, left), First Secretary at the Spanish embassy in London, laying a wreath; Rob Garcia and Paul McNamara (below, right) of Na-mara; speakers (bottom, from left) Hilary Jones, Megan Dobney and Mike Arnott.  
Photos: Andrew Wiard



"YET FREEDOM! YET THY BANNER,  
TORN, BUT FLYING, STREAMS  
OFT THE THUNDER-STORM  
AGAINST THE WIND"



It's widely known that within the American Abraham Lincoln Battalion of the International Brigades there were a number of African-Americans. Most famously the Texan military veteran and communist, Oliver Law, became the first black American to command white troops in battle; when he was tragically killed at Brunete in July 1937, he had risen to the rank of commander of the American volunteers.

What is much less known is that there was a mixed-race British volunteer serving in the British Battalion. His name was Charlie Hutchison.

Until recently little has been known about Charlie for, apart from a small file held within the Comintern archives in Moscow, few details of his time in Spain remained in the public domain.

Thanks to research undertaken by history students at Newham Sixth Form College in collaboration with the Marx Memorial Library in London, we are now finding out more about Hutchison. First a photo of him was discovered, and then contact was made with his family. More details about Charlie's life are to be revealed by the library this October during Black History Month.

We know that Charles William R Hutchison was born in Witney, Oxfordshire, on 10 May 1918. His mother, whose maiden name was Harper, was presumably not in a position to raise him, for Hutchison tells of growing up in the National Children's Home and Orphanage in London.

In the spring of 1936, having just turned 18 years of age, he was living in Fulham and working as a lorry driver. He was also branch chair of the local Young Communist League and it seems clear, from remarks he made later, that he had become personally involved in the battle against Sir Oswald Mosley's Blackshirts.

In the late summer of 1936 this led him, like nearly 2,500 from Britain and Ireland, to volunteer to go to Spain and personally take the fight to Franco, Hitler and Mussolini. As he explained to MJ Hynes for Hynes's 1985 Manchester University dissertation 'The British Battalion of the XVth International Brigade': 'I am half black. I grew up in the National Children's Home and Orphanage. Fascism meant hunger and war.'

For Charlie, as for the numerous Jewish volunteers, fascism was a real and personal threat, beyond any theoretical abstraction.

He left Britain in either late November or early December 1936 and was recorded by Special Branch as having 'left for Spain to serve as machine gunner with Govt. Forces'.

At this time the British Battalion had not yet been formed, so, once in Spain, he joined the British and Irish dominated No.1 Company of the mainly French Marseillaise Battalion of the 14th International Brigade.

He was with the unit when it was sent to contain

# CHARLIE HUTCHISON

October is Black History Month, and to mark it **RICHARD BAXELL** writes about Charlie Hutchison (pictured on facing page), a mixed-race volunteer in the British Battalion.



▲ Oliver Law, killed at the Battle of Brunete while commanding the Abraham Lincoln Battalion.

a rebel breakthrough at Lopera, on the Córdoba front in southern Spain. There, outnumbered and at the mercy of the rebels' overwhelming air dominance, the British and Irish company was cut to pieces. Charlie Hutchison was wounded and a great number of his comrades—including Charles Darwin's great-grandson, John Cornford—were killed.

Having recuperated from his wounds, Charlie was informed that he was going to be sent home due to his age, but, according to Bill Alexander in

**'The Brigaders came out of the working class; they came out of the Battle of Cable Street, they came out of the struggles on the side turnings ... they weren't communist, they weren't socialist, but they were anti-fascist.'**



▲ Application for a safe-conduct pass for Charlie Hutchison.

'British Volunteers for Liberty', he refused to leave. So, rather than being sent to join his compatriots in the British Battalion then fighting on the Jarama front, he was transferred away from the line, assigned to be an ambulance driver with the 5th Republican Army Corps.

However, while Charlie seemingly wanted to remain in Spain, his mother (from whom it seems he was no longer estranged) was of a different mind and she wrote in April 1937, citing her son's young age and pleading that he be sent home. This seem to have rather changed Charlie's feelings, partly because he was becoming worried about his stepfather, who had been hospitalised with serious gastric problems.

Over the next few months, Charlie made a number of appeals to his superiors, garnering much support, but little success. The following June, he wrote a worried note explaining that he hadn't received a letter from his parents for 10 months, leading him to assume that they must be facing dire circumstances. Hutchison asked only that he might be granted a temporary leave of absence to deal with his family problems. 'I have been in Spain since



**CHARLIE HUTCHISON:** Served two years in Spain from December 1936.

Nov 25th 1936,' he pleaded. 'When I came to Spain I was 18½ yrs and not on one occasion have I use[d] my age for an excuse.'

Assessments by his superiors make it manifestly clear that the lack of progress was not as a result of any failure on Hutchison's part. Jim Ruskin, a captain in Brigade Transmissions, recounted that both Hutchison's political views and his work were 'Good [and] for his age quite developed.' Likewise, Charlie's senior officer in the Motorised Company of the 5th Army Corps, Harry Evans, described Hutchison as 'a hard and capable worker'.

Finally, in August 1938, an order was given that Hutchison should be repatriated due to his young age and exemplary period of service. On the 27th of that month the Italian communist, Luigi Longo, one of the most senior and powerful commanders of the International Brigades (known in Spain as 'Gallo'), wrote accordingly to a Comrade Fusimaña, the Commissar of the 5th Army Corps, on Hutchison's behalf.

Despite this, nothing seems to have happened, for on 2 September 1938 Charlie sent another personal appeal, complaining that 'I was 18 when I

came to Spain and I feel it is just to[o] bad if the IB can't release a kid of 20 y[ea]rs after nearly two years of good service.'

His appeal was answered personally by Alonso 'Lon' Elliott, a former Cambridge University languages student, who worked under Luigi Longo in the Political Commissars' headquarters in Madrid and in the Foreign Cadres Commission of the Spanish Communist Party in Barcelona. Elliott assured Charlie that he was taking a personal interest in his case and apologised that it still hadn't been resolved.

After all these efforts, one might assume that he would have been repatriated with the other British volunteers, following their withdrawal from the front in September. However, when the survivors of the British Battalion crossed the border into France on 6 December 1938, Hutchison was not among them. Only on 19 December, nearly two weeks later, was he finally released from service and repatriated.

U ntil recently, little evidence could be found of Hutchison's later life. What was known was that Charlie was one of the first of the Spanish veterans to volunteer for service in the British Army in the Second World War. He served for a time in Iran, before being transferred to France in 1944, just after D-Day. And in early 1947, a Charles W Hutchison was married to a Patricia L Holloway and the same individual reappears in the electoral register of 1958, living at 11 Argyll Mansions, Fulham, London. He later moved to Bournemouth, where he died in March 1993, aged 74.

It's not much to go on, so it's great to hear that fresh information about the life of the only black volunteer among the Britons in Spain will shortly be published by the Marx Memorial Library. And, in the circumstances, it's only fitting that Charlie should have the last word.

In his 1985 interview with MJ Hynes, Charlie was asked why he believed so many people from around the world joined him in choosing to risk their lives on behalf of the Spanish Republic: 'The Brigaders came out of the working class; they came out of the Battle of Cable Street, they came out of the struggles on the side turnings ... they weren't communist, they weren't socialist, but they were anti-fascist.'

*Richard Baxell is an historian and author of, among other books, 'Unlikely Warriors: The Extraordinary Story of the Britons who Fought in the Spanish Civil War'. His next book will be a collection of biographies of British people who became involved in the Spanish Civil War. This article is an updated and edited version of a blog on his website (see [www.richardbaxell.info/category/biogs-obits](http://www.richardbaxell.info/category/biogs-obits)).*

## So which country sent proportionately most volunteers to Spain

The old chestnut of which country or nationality proportionately sent more volunteers to fight in the Spanish Civil War keeps popping up.

First, comments in May by historian Fraser Raeburn about the number of Scots who went to Spain sparked a discussion on Twitter.

'I really, really wish that people would stop repeating this myth that proportionally more Scots went to Spain than any other nationality,' he wrote in response to a claim made in the publicity for the play '549: Scots of the Spanish Civil War', which was

► Cuban-born Alberto Bayo (right) pictured with Fidel Castro (second from right) and Che Guevara (left) during the Cuban Revolution. Bayo had served as a lieutenant colonel in the Spanish Republic's army during the Spanish Civil War.

touring Scottish venues at the time.

'The claim literally falls at the first hurdle,' Fraser wrote. 'The largest national contingent in Spain was the French, with 8-10,000 volunteers from a population of 41.5 million. Even using the lower end of that estimate, that's about one in 5,200 of the French population as a whole.'

He continued: 'The usual (and slightly too high) estimate for Scotland is 549 volunteers, from a population of 4.9 million – so, about one in 8,900 of the Scottish population.'

Next came a claim that Cuba sent the highest proportion of volunteers. It was made in June in Mexico City at an international symposium marking the

80th anniversary of the arrival of the first wave of Spanish Republican refugees in Mexico.

Cuban historian Victor Pina Tabío said that 1,225 Cubans volunteered to fight for the Republic – though he conceded that some could also be defined as Spanish as they had Spanish parents or had been born



## Preserving Mick's Eastbourne mural

Thanks go to Sussex-based IBMT member Mike Anderson for keeping an eye on the fate of a magnificent mural – two segments pictured above – which was co-painted by the late IBMT Trustee and artist Mick Jones (left) for the former hotel and conference centre run by the Transport & General Workers' Union, now Unite, in Eastbourne. The good news, reports Mike, is that local unions have decided to preserve the history and memory of the mural, which used to hang in what is currently the View Hotel and still owned by Unite. The building was opened in 1976 by Mick's father, Jack Jones, International Brigade veteran and TGWU General Secretary at the time.

Painted by the Art Workers' Co-operative, comprising Simon Barber and Mick Jones, who died in 2012, the 'International Worker Mural' has been dismantled and will be re-hung at Unite's new hotel and conference centre being built in Birmingham. The mural, among other things, features a reference to 'solidarity with Spain'. Mike Anderson tells us that Eastbourne Trades Union

Council says it will be producing a commemorative brochure with the story of the mural, which will show it 'in all its colourful glory'.



An interesting recent thread on the FFALB (Friends & Families of the Abraham Lincoln Brigade) Google group on the subject of Arab volunteers in the International Brigades threw up this contribution from Victor Grossman...

**I**n connection with the mention of Palestinian Arabs who fought for the Spanish Republic,' he wrote, 'you may be interested in the following episode, which I included in my book about the Spanish war... but all in German, I'm afraid.' The account, he adds, is about a volunteer called Selim and was written by the German communist writer and International Brigader Hans Marchwitza:

● **In one room there was a machine-gun team. There were about 10 men, among them the tall, Jewish Abraham, a mason by trade, then Königmann, also Jewish, the Polish gunman Adamovich and the Arab, Selim. Selim had been in the group since the battles in the Parco del Jesy in November. He was a miner like his Polish comrades and came with them from the French mine region.**

The presence of Selim brought a special note into the life of the unit. As soon as it faced the *moros* [Moors], Selim started up his special propaganda method. He raised a green flag with the half-moon symbol and called over: 'Hey, you capitalist dogs, do you recognise this flag? Go ahead and shoot at it if it's not holy for you. Fire away at your own people, you've long since



## My farewell issue as editor

This is my last *¡No Pasarán!* as its editor. I'll be relinquishing that position at this year's Annual General Meeting.

I've been editing the IBMT's magazine continuously since 2008, when the Executive Committee first elected me to the role. I replaced Gerry Abrahams, who launched the *IBMT Newsletter*, as it was first called, in 2002. It began as an 8-page black and white bulletin and has grown – along with the IBMT – into this 24-page colour magazine.

Back in those early years we barely had an online or social media presence. All that has now changed, and since 2016 the magazine has been supplemented by the *IBMT eNewsletter*, which keeps members informed by email of all the latest news and developments.

It's now time for somebody else to become the editor, hopefully with fresh ideas to take us forward into the new digital age.

It's been a pleasure and honour to be the IBMT's editor. I certainly plan to remain active in the IBMT and hope, if re-elected to the Executive Committee at this year's AGM, to work closely with whoever will be in charge of the magazine.

## – Scotland, Cuba, France or somewhere else?

before Cuban independence from Spain in 1898. In addition, not all of them were in the International Brigades; many served in Spanish-speaking units.

With Cuba having a population in the 1930s of about 4 million, that works out roughly at one volunteer for every 3,560 people – higher

than Fraser's total for the French.

Is any of this important? Probably not. Over the years there have been competing claims that Greek Cypriots or Jewish Palestinians hold the distinction of proportionately supplying more volunteers than other national groups.

One mischievous suggestion in the thread prompted by Fraser Raeburn's tweet was that, if you include the 600 Blueshirts who volunteered to fight for Franco, then Ireland holds the dubious first place for the greatest per capita involvement in the Spanish Civil War.

As far as the anti-fascist

**'The volunteers went to Spain for the most part as proud internationalists and not as flag-waving nationalists.'**

International Brigades are concerned, however, we should never forget that the volunteers went to Spain for the most part as proud internationalists and not as flag-waving nationalists.

◀ The IBMT's Antifascistas exhibition was on show in Mexico City from 12-14 June during an international symposium at the UNAM National Autonomous University of Mexico at which the national totals of volunteers in Spain came in for discussion. For the exhibition, Spanish translations were provided for each of the 15 panels, which tell the story of the British and Irish International Brigaders in the Spanish Civil War.



## An Arab Brigader and Franco's Moors

stopped being worthy of calling yourselves Mohammedans – ever since you became bloodhounds for Franco! And he scolded and cursed in Arabic loud enough for all the *moros* across the lines to hear him.

Then they would yell back: 'What are you doing there with those damned Reds, those Christian curs?'

Selim answered: 'I'm here, you dogs, to punish you for licking the boots of our oppressors, for betraying our brothers in Morocco. I'm going to fire away at you right away – so none of you ever sees Morocco again!'

The *moros* yelled back: 'But you're a

Mohammedan!' 'Of course I'm a Mohammedan,' Selim answered. 'But my faith won't be soiled by murdering a brother! I only shoot at my enemies – which means you if you stay over there!'

In this way Selim was able to get some of the Moroccans – in one case 14 at a time – to cross over with their weapons.

This account by Marchwitza is taken from: Erich Weinert's 'Die Fahne der Solidarität, Deutsche Schriftsteller in der spanischen Volksarmee 1936-1939' (Aufbau Verlag, East Berlin, 1953). ('The Flag of Solidarity: German Writers in the Spanish People's Army 1936-1939'. The translation is by Victor Grossman.

Victor's latest book, 'A Socialist Defector: From Harvard to Karl-Marx-Allee', has been published this year. It's no autobiography, he insists. That was 'Crossing the River: A Memoir of the American Left, the Cold War, and Life in East Germany' (2003). It is a look back at 38 years of observing and being part of the rise and fall of an experiment in socialism, the German Democratic Republic, with my analyses, conclusions and application of the lessons I learned to today's world. It is hopefully made readable by personal anecdotes and jokes.'



▲ Hans Marchwitza was remembered in this East German postage stamp issued in 1966, the year after his death.



# THE CO

The sheer viciousness of the propaganda and hatred faced by those Irish who took such a courageous stand against fascism in Spain was summed up in a series of articles that ran all week in the *Irish Independent* in the new year of 1937 and concluded with the following fascist curse pronounced on those Irish International Brigadiers who met their deaths. These began with Achill islander Tommy Patten in December 1936 and ended with Jack Nalty and Liam McGregor in September 1938:

*In concluding these articles, I wish to state that the present Government of Madrid is 100% Red and violently opposed to the Catholic Church. Any Irishman preparing to fight for or defend vicariously this regime is defending the enemy of his faith.*

The IBMT honours the memory of all those who had the moral courage to confront unpopularity on the home front in Ireland through their defence of the Spanish Republic.

They were led in the south by that brave republican priest who had read the invocation on the occasion when the freely elected first Dáil met to ratify the Irish Republic in 1919 – the former vice president of Sinn Féin, Father Michael O’Flanagan.

And they were defiantly led in the north by the

▶ Michael O’Riordan (left) and Bob Doyle, next to a 1938 memorial banner now held at Dublin’s National Museum at Collins Barracks.

◀ Stained glass window in Belfast City Hall, created by Derry-based Alpha Stained Glass. It was unveiled in 2015 and depicts the way that the anti-fascist cause in Spain brought together the different communities in the city.



# NONNOLLY COLUMN

IBMT Ireland Secretary **MANUS O'RIORDAN** describes how the more than 200 Irish International Brigaders overcame hostility and sectarian divisions at home to create a united fight against fascism.

then chairman of the Northern Ireland Labour Party and future Unionist Party Minister for Education in the postwar government of Northern Ireland, Harry Midgley.

As for those who volunteered to go to Spain to fight, the wording of a plaque unveiled in Belfast in September 2006 was broad enough to encompass both strong and weak, because we knew what it cost each and every one of them to take the stand they did. It was dedicated to those volunteers 'who stood against Fascism'.

It was pleasing to note that this wording was unequivocally solid enough to exclude any honours for the man who claimed to have been the first Irish volunteer, Charlie McGuinness of Derry. He initially did go out to Spain but, when offered the opportunity to actually fight for the Republic, he promptly returned home in December 1936 and during that same month, while the first Irish International Brigaders were

being killed in action, he commenced producing such scurrilous – but all too influential – fascist propaganda for the *Irish Independent*.

**I**t was none other than that same McGuinness who had been the author of that fascist curse quoted above. Despite his betrayal of Irish International Brigaders, we will always honour those heroes, to mention just two of them named in Christy Moore's song 'Viva la Quince Brigada':  
*Bob Hilliard was a Church of Ireland pastor  
 From Killarney across the Pyrenees he came  
 From Derry came a brave young Christian  
 Brother  
 Side by side they fought and died in Spain.  
 Éamon McGrotty was that Derryman's  
 name.*

I accompanied McGrotty's late brother John in 1994 and 1996 to the mass grave of 5,000 fighters where Éamon is buried near Jarama.

John brought soil from their parents' grave to mix into that mass grave and brought some of Jarama's soil back to their grave. He carried his brother Éamon's own missal with him on both occasions, and retold the double hurt experienced by his family when they sought to have a mass said after Éamon's death in February 1937 and the Bishop of Derry refused them, saying that a mass would be no benefit whatsoever to Éamon, as he was 'now in Hell'. McGuinness's dirty work had borne fruit.

Thanks to research undertaken by Ciarán Crossey and Jim Carmody, we have an ever-expanding roll of honour for the Irish volunteers. Of the northern volunteers on the roll published by the International Brigade Commemoration Committee in Belfast, six of them had served alongside my father, Michael O'Riordan, in the British Battalion in the 1938 Battle of the Ebro.

One Ulsterman who survived that battle was the first of my father's immediate comrades-in-arms that I remember from early childhood, Hughie Hunter from Ballyclare, Co Antrim, who always brought his mouth organ down with him from Belfast to play tunes for us in our Dublin home and whom my father brought to life in an interview with Ciarán Crossey. He recalled Hughie carefully saving his few pesetas at the front in order to send home a regular donation to the Communist Party of Ireland's unity fund in Belfast.

**A**nybody fortunate enough to have heard the 2006 BBC Radio Ulster programme by Diarmaid Fleming could not fail to have been moved by the accounts of volunteers from the north: Peggy Mount talking about her brother Dick O'Neill from the Falls Road; Liz Shaw talking about her father Joe Boyd from Co Tyrone; Harry McGrath being recalled by his Shankill Road nephews. Such volunteers came both from Catholic and Protestant religious backgrounds; from republican, communist, labour and loyalist political traditions.

CONTINUED OVERLEAF



## Was there a 'Connolly Column' in Spain?

**From Michael O'Riordan's 'The Connolly Column: The story of the Irishmen who fought for the Spanish Republic 1936-1939'**\*

A word on the title of my 1979 book 'Connolly Column'. At no stage did I ever maintain that this was the formal title of an actual operational military unit in which all Irish volunteers served in Spain, which is why I placed the 'Connolly Column' in inverted commas when used by me in accounts of wartime actions. The earliest Irish volunteers in the International Brigades' British Battalion did, however, refer at that time either to its Irish Column,

as did Bill Scott, or to the Connolly Unit, as the No.1 Section of the first English-speaking company, as did Donie O'Reilly. A James Connolly Unit was also formally established by the American Abraham Lincoln Battalion in January 1937, with Peter O'Connor as its group leader. Severe losses in both battalions made a continuation of a separate Irish structure as operationally impractical as it was politically unnecessary.

Such was my own experience in the British Battalion in 1938. For the final year the British Battalion was in fact led by three successive Irish commanders – Wexford's

Peter Daly, Donegal's Paddy O'Daire, and the Manchester-Irishman Sam Wild. Connolly and Wolfe Tone commemorations were events for the British Battalion as a whole, rather than being confined to a limited number of Irish volunteers...

But why subsequently call ourselves the Connolly Column? No such body as the Abraham Lincoln Brigade ever fought in Spain. 'Veterans of the Abraham Lincoln Brigade' was set up as an organisation after that war in order to bring together US veterans who had fought in both the Washington and Lincoln Battalions, as well as the

### FROM PREVIOUS PAGE

People from all those traditions have come together at a succession of events to honour the memory of the volunteers. Such coming together does not abolish real political differences but it does enhance the human relationships that make dialogue possible. And while such events provide no solution for the Irish question, in our coming together to honour all who defended the Spanish Republic we might note that in that one particular struggle there was in fact an interchange and identity of language used in Spain itself, where every republican was a loyalist and every loyalist a republican.

The volunteers who hailed from the south were all Irish republicans in the Wolfe Tone tradition – Catholic, Protestant, Jewish and atheist. There is space only to name a few.

Bill Scott came from a Dublin Protestant working class tradition that had seen his father take up arms as a member of the Irish Citizen Army alongside his leader James Connolly in the 1916 Rising.

Frank Edwards was a Waterford teacher who had already been victimised by the Christian Brothers and who, on his return from Spain, found himself blacklisted by Catholic schools for his Spanish republicanism and by Protestant schools for his Irish republicanism, but who also found that the one and only school prepared to employ him was Dublin's Jewish National School. Frank had been born in Belfast in 1907 to a Catholic family that was subsequently forced out of its home by sectarian conflict and then settled in Waterford.

Another Irish volunteer was Maurice Levitas – known to family and friends as Morry – from a Dublin Jewish working class tradition, his parents

being refugees who had fled Tsarist antisemitism in Latvia and Lithuania. During the course of the Second World War, Morry's maternal aunt Rachel and her family would become Holocaust victims in Riga. His paternal aunt Sara, her family and neighbours would be locked into their own Lithuanian village synagogue and burned to death.

A paternal uncle in Paris, whom Morry had visited on his way to Spain in 1938 and again on his way back in 1939 following his release with Bob Doyle from the San Pedro de Cardena concentration camp, and who thought he had emigrated far enough west to be safe, would also be murdered on his own doorstep by the Gestapo at the very end of the war.

Christy Moore's song speaks of 'the rising fascist tide', and it was that tide which those International Brigade volunteers – so derisively referred to by the British and American establishments as 'premature anti-fascists' – had fought so hard to halt.

Another volunteer, originally from Kerry but for a number of years intimately linked with the city of Belfast as a Church of Ireland clergyman, was the Reverend Robert M Hilliard, who was to fall at Jarama in February 1937. Hilliard was a Protestant republican, not only in respect of the Spanish Civil War, but also in respect of his native Ireland. Hilliard had in fact been an IRA volunteer in Kerry during the Irish Civil War.

In 1931 he was to serve as a Church of Ireland curate in Christ Church, Derrriaghy, and in 1972 that church was presented with a communion chalice, paten and cruet in his memory by a fellow International Brigader who was himself an agnostic, the Co Tyrone



Robert Hilliard, above, and Charlie Donnelly, below, both killed in February 1937 at the Battle of Jarama.



Canadian Mackenzie-Papineau Battalion. In a similar fashion both Peter O'Connor and myself proposed that the Connolly Column was the most appropriate name under which all Irish volunteers who had fought in the International Brigades might be honoured.

\* First published by New Books, Berlin, 1979, and reprinted by Warren & Pell, Pontypool, 2005.

► Dublin City Council civic reception in February 1997 for Connolly Column veterans (from left) Maurice Levitas and Michael O'Riordan and (from right) Bob Doyle and Peter O'Connor.



Independent Labour Party volunteer, Joe Boyd.

After he had been appointed to the Belfast Cathedral Mission in 1933, Hilliard became greatly radicalised by the social upheavals in Belfast at that time. Personal problems saw him subsequently leave for London where he became even more radicalised in later years, joining the Communist Party of Great Britain and volunteering for Spain in December 1936.

Hilliard's last message to his family was dated 24 January 1937 – a fortnight before his death. He wrote:

*My dear, Five minutes ago I got your letter. There is a Daily Worker delegation here who will take this back. They leave in ten minutes so I have time for no more than a card which will have an English postmark. Teach the kids to stand for democracy. Thanks for the parcels, I expect they have been forwarded to me, but posts are held up very long & especially parcels. Do not worry too much about me, I expect I shall be quite safe. I think I am going to make quite a good soldier. I still hate fighting but this time it has to be done, unless fascism is beaten in Spain & in the world it means war and hell for our kids. All the time when I am thinking of you & the children I am glad I have come. Give my love to Tim, Deirdre, Davnet & Kit. Write when you can, it will help. Love to you, Robert.*

The very last Irish volunteer to reach Spain was an Ulsterman, James Patrick Haughey from Lurgan, Co Armagh, who had fought shoulder-to-shoulder with my father, Michael O'Riordan, in the Battle of the Ebro during July and August 1938; and who was captured and imprisoned that September in the concentration camp of San Pedro de Cardena. As with the letters of the

Reverend Bob Hilliard, the following extract from a letter written from Canada after Haughey's release from that fascist hell brings us still closer to the great humanity of all such volunteers. The letter from Jim to his sister Veronica is dated 25 May 1939:

*It would be impossible to describe the humiliations we suffered after that [capture] until we arrived in the concentration camp. Here we met some more international prisoners of war. There were 36 different nationalities including Irish, British and Americans (some time I will describe this camp, it was very interesting). Here I had my head dressed and settled down patiently to await the day when we should be liberated. There were 400 of us in a room which would hold 50 comfortably, no smokes, no books, 1 toilet and one water tap for 400 men, abundance of lice, very little food, beans twice a day. For the last 3 months before we were released we were fed on bread and water, nothing else.*

Jim Haughey went on to prove his continuing anti-fascist valour. He volunteered for the Royal Canadian Air Force in June 1941. He was killed

**‘The volunteers who hailed from the south were all Irish republicans in the Wolfe Tone tradition – Catholic, Protestant, Jewish and atheist.’**

in a plane crash on 12 September 1943, and his name is engraved on Canada's World War Two Book of Remembrance. Like Charlie Donnelly, he had expressed in verse the anticipation of his own death, which also occurred at the age of 23.

On 31 October 1943 *The Times* of London posthumously published Jim's poem – simply entitled 'Fighter Pilot' – over the name of Séamus Haughey. These verses have echoes of the WB Yeats poem 'An Irish Airman Foresees his Death', but possess the greater authenticity of being the actual premonitions of a real airman, rather than Yeats's attribution of his own imagined thoughts to Robert Gregory. What I hadn't realised until 2005 was that Jim had already lost his father a year before. Able seaman James Aloysius Haughey had been killed at sea – torpedoed by a Nazi German submarine – on 1 February 1942.

Reflections on his father's death at sea are also present in the first verse, where James Patrick speculates about his own forthcoming death.

*I think that it will come, somewhen,  
somewhere  
In shattering crash, or roaring sheet of  
flame;  
In the green-blanket sea, choking for air,  
Amid the bubbles transient as my name.*

The final verse is a tribute to him and to all of his internationalist comrades who stood against fascism in defence of the Spanish Republic.

*When peace descends once more like gentle  
rain,  
Mention my name in passing, if you must,  
As one who knew the terms – slay or be slain,  
And thought the bargain was both good  
and just.*

## Let's make sure the IBMT will be here for many years to come

Dear IBMT supporter,

The time has come to take the IBMT into a more permanent realm, to ensure that we will continue and expand our work for the next few years and beyond. To do that, we are appointing a part-time Executive Officer, based in our London office, to manage and coordinate the Trust's work.

We have the money to fund this appointment for the immediate future, thanks to very generous legacies and donations from our members who

**'Do consider remembering the Trust in your will, if only for a modest amount, or indeed, making a substantial donation now.'**



recognise the importance of continuing our work well into the future. Their generosity is making sure that the sacrifices of all who fought fascism in Spain were not in vain and that their example will serve to inspire generations for many years to come.

The IBMT has developed and succeeded well beyond the remit we gave ourselves when we first met in 2000. We are all of us volunteers, giving our time, energy and our knowledge to the cause. The veterans who were such a help and inspiration to us then are no longer with us, and the organisation and running of the IBMT has become a big commitment, too large to be left to volunteers, many of whom are not quite as young as we once were!

This is why I am urging you all now, please, please, do consider remembering the Trust in your will, if only for a modest amount, or indeed, making a substantial donation now, so that you can sustain the growth of the Trust and be happy that your gift is being used to continue to promote the ideals of Peace, Democracy and Freedom, as embroidered on the British Battalion banner in Spain more than 80 years ago.

The decision to create what became the IBMT was made in the Marx Memorial Library on 28 October 2000 at a meeting chaired by Professor Paul Preston. There were 13 Brigade veterans present, together with 21 members of the Friends and Families of the International Brigades, researchers and historians. Letters of support from other veterans were also read out. We were all determined to continue the legacy of those who fought and died in Spain.

Our aims have been to maintain memorials; publish a regular newsletter; establish a website with information about the volunteers; work with other groups at home and abroad who share our aims; develop an education programme, including an exhibition, talks and publications; and help researchers, writers and artists wanting to tell the story of the International Brigades.

Our first President, Jack Jones, wrote to his comrades in the unions, and they were generous with their financial support to get us started. We also received generous support from the Brigade

veterans. They realised how important it was to keep the memory and spirit of the International Brigades alive as an example to future generations and as a warning to guard against the ever-present threat of fascism.

I believe we have more than fulfilled the hopes and expectations that the veterans had for the IBMT.

**'We have more than fulfilled the hopes and expectations that the veterans had for the IBMT.'**

We must now make sure that our work can continue for many years to come – and for that to happen we need your support.

This is how you can help...

**DONATIONS:** Please send your donation direct to me. Make cheques payable to the IBMT and post them, with your name and address, to: Marlene Sidaway, IBMT, 37a Clerkenwell Green, London EC1R 0DU. If your donation is for £50 or more you will automatically become a Friend of the IBMT (see back cover of this issue).

**LEGACIES:** I will be happy to discuss with you any arrangements for leaving a legacy to the IBMT in your will. My email is [president@international-brigades.org.uk](mailto:president@international-brigades.org.uk) and I will reply personally to you on this subject. For example you may wish to leave money for a particular aspect of the IBMT's work.

Your continuing support for the IBMT, in whatever form, whether as an individual member, donor or affiliated organisation, is greatly appreciated. Thank you for helping us keep alive the inspirational story of the International Brigades. And thank you for taking the time to consider this appeal. I very much look forward to hearing from you. ¡Salud!

*Marlene Sidaway.*

**Marlene Sidaway (left) is the IBMT President and former partner of International Brigader David Marshall (1916-2005). As an actress she has appeared this year as Flora in 'Beneath the Blue Rinse' at the Park Theatre, London, as Maureen in BBC2's Bafta-nominated sitcom 'Mum' and as Dot in the latest series of 'In the Long Run' on Netflix.**

# MAUTHAUSEN

## International Brigade Memorial Trust



◀ A Spanish Republican flag at the Mauthausen concentration camp.

▶ Displays and memorials for Spanish Republicans and International Brigaders killed in the camp.

▼ An image from the 2018 Netflix film 'The Photographer of Mauthausen' about Francesc Boix, the Catalan prisoner who hid photographs of conditions and atrocities at the camp.

▼▼ Spaniards welcoming the liberation of the camp in May 1945.



# NEVER FORGET the crimes of fascism

The Mauthausen Nazi concentration camp in Austria is a stark reminder that for many Spanish Republicans their suffering continued after the end of the Spanish Civil War in 1939. Originally established in 1938 to hold mainly communist and socialist political prisoners, along with homosexuals and Jehovah's Witnesses, the camp was the destination for at least 10,000 Spanish Republicans, as well as many International Brigaders, most of whom were rounded up by the Nazi-collaborating Vichy government in France. Up to 7,000 of the Spaniards died in the camp.

Statistics are sketchy, but it is estimated that some 200,000 prisoners passed through Mauthausen, of whom roughly half that number died there. They included 14,000 Jews, a relatively small number in the context of the Holocaust, as most Jews were sent direct to extermination camps.

The former slave labour camp of Mauthausen is today open to the public, and these photos have been sent to us by Mario Kloostra, a Dutchman living in southern France whose own family members took part in the war in Spain and then the underground anti-Nazi resistance in the Netherlands.

They are a timely reminder of the crimes of fascism on this 80th anniversary of the end of the Spanish Civil War and the start of the Second World War – which the International Brigade volunteers predicted would take place unless fascism was stopped in Spain.

# FROM THE ARCHIVES



# POSTER ART

The Marx Memorial Library's unique collection of previously uncatalogued posters, including 60 from the Spanish Civil War or about the International Brigades, can now be searched online.

With sponsorship from the People's Support Foundation, each print has been individually photographed and catalogued by volunteers and staff (pictured right). The library's posters date from 1870 to 1990 and, apart from the war in Spain, also include many rare and classic examples of poster art from the

Russian Revolution and Soviet Union, anti-apartheid campaigns and the peace and nuclear disarmament movements.

The catalogue was launched in London earlier this year by art historian Christine Lindey and conservationist Graham Bignell.

To browse the posters go to the library's website – [www.marx-memorial-library.org](http://www.marx-memorial-library.org) – then to 'Collections' and 'Search our catalogue'; type Spanish Civil War and see the results under the 'poster' tab.



## Significant flaws mar this military account

**‘Spain in Arms: A Military History of the Spanish Civil War 1936-39’ by ER Hooton (Casemate Publishers, 2019).**

ER Hooton is an established writer of many military books. The maps, photographs and the immense detail of who commanded each corps and division and the number of tanks, guns and airplanes that were involved in each battle is impressive. The planning for each battle, what the two sides hoped to achieve and the results of each battle are clearly related and covered in depth.

The author states in the preface that the idea of an outgunned Spanish Republic beaten by foreign troops is a myth. He gives detailed evidence to show that military equipment sent to each side went in greater numbers to the Republicans, except in the case of aircraft, and that percentages of foreign troops on both sides were very small. He further comments that the Nationalists won the civil war by their ability to get most of their best military equipment to the battle lines much more efficiently than the Republicans. These points and the data he presents I believe to be correct, but this does not tell the full story.

In the battles he relates, the Nationalists’ shock troops were often the foreign contingents. After the Battle of Brunete in July 1937 the Republicans always ended up being outgunned both in artillery and aircraft. When both sides had similar numbers of military hardware the Republicans suffered from lack of spare parts, lack of ammunition and

inexperienced military specialists. In the pitched battles Hooton is correct in saying that the Nationalist were able to bring their best weapons to bear in greater quantities than the Republicans, which meant the typical battle experience of a Republican soldier was to be outgunned.

The book has several weaknesses. His use of language on occasions is colourful and often biased: previous military accounts of the civil war consist of ‘more garbage than a landfill site’; the International

Brigades ‘represented one of the most cynical publicity stunts since the Children’s Crusade’.

The author makes some bizarre claims. He states that the Republicans garrisoned a chemical war factory during the Battle of Jarama and had plans to use gas against the Nationalists if they were overrun. He then relates that the garrison was overrun before they were able to activate the poison gas. I know of no other author who mentions this.

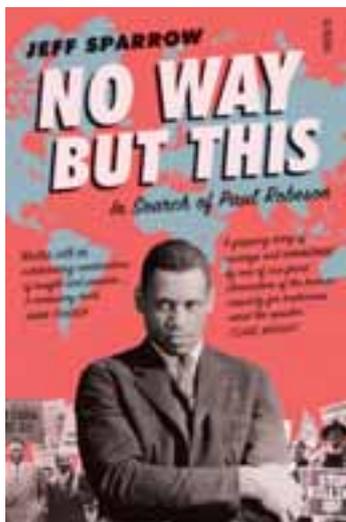
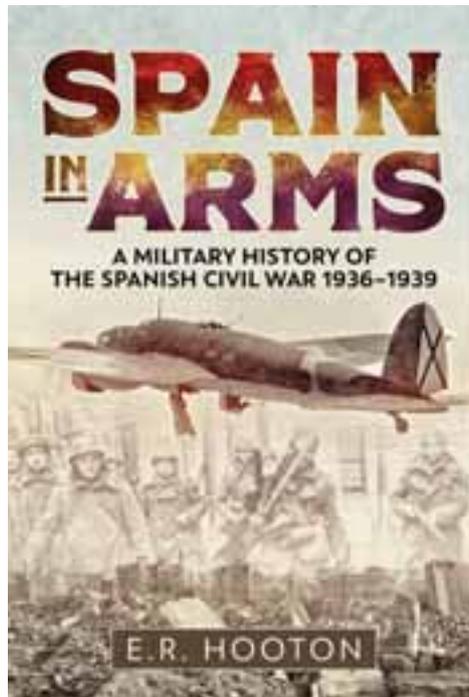
Secondly, on Guernica he claims: ‘It was not a terror attack, and Guernica was not supposed to be the target!’ Hooton states that the Condor Legion meant to bomb Gernikaitz, which Basque troops were retreating towards. Many books have been written on Guernica; none seriously supports this view.

He also claims that the communists were reluctant to accept the idea of organising a disciplined and regular army and commissars were set up as a ‘sop to the revolutionaries’. Both comments are ridiculous. The communists created the 5th Regiment and were the strongest adherents of the idea of a conventional, disciplined army, containing commissars.

In conclusion, this is a useful book about the military side of the civil war, but spoilt by some significant flaws.

**CHRISTOPHER HALL**

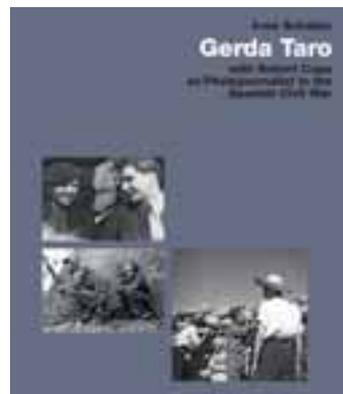
*Christopher Hall is an IBMT Trustee and the author of ‘In Spain with Orwell: George Orwell and the Independent Labour Party Volunteers in the Spanish Civil War, 1936-1939’ (2013).*



**ROBESON’S JOURNEY:** In the quest for the spirit of Paul Robeson, author Jeff Sparrow travels across the world to retrace the black American singer and actor’s footprints. The journey takes him

from Sydney, in Sparrow’s native Australia, where Robeson’s career ended in 1960, via North Carolina (where Paul’s father had been enslaved); thence to Princeton, New Jersey, Robeson’s birthplace, and New York, where he lived most of his adult life. From there he goes to Britain, where Robeson’s political education as a communist began among the miners of South Wales, and then to Spain, where he defended the cause of the Spanish Republic and the International Brigades.

Paul, one of the great US civil rights and political activists of the 20th century, also spent time in Moscow, scene of many of his triumphs. But, as Sparrow recounts, it was also where he became aware, traumatically, of Stalin’s crimes. *‘No Way But This: In Search of Paul Robeson’ by Jeff Sparrow (Scribe, 2017).*



**TARO REVISITED:** In this fully revised biography, Irma Schaber presents fresh insights regarding the life of Gerda Taro and the circumstances surrounding her death. Taro today is considered one of the pioneers of photography. She captured some of the most dramatic and widely published images of the Spanish Civil War and was the first

female photographer to shoot images in the midst of battle – which ultimately cost her life.

Her death in the Battle of Brunete in the summer of 1937 garnered worldwide attention. But her reputation was soon eclipsed by her colleague and partner Robert Capa. The combination of woman-communist-Jew represented a threefold stigma that would ensure Taro’s exclusion from official history, Schaber argues.

It has been 20 years since her first biography of Gerda Taro, which helped the process of Taro’s ‘rediscovery’. Since that time, the discovery of the ‘Mexican Suitcase’, containing more than 800 of her photos, has made new research on Taro possible.

*‘Gerda Taro, with Robert Capa as Photojournalist in the Spanish Civil War’ by Irma Schaber (Axel Menges, 2018).*

# 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 *No 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](http://www.international-brigades.org.uk)) or phone 020 7253 8748 to request a membership affiliation form.

## DIRECTORY

### ● Aberdeen XV International Brigade Commemoration Committee

Contact: Tommy Campbell  
[tommy.campbell01@outlook.com](mailto:tommy.campbell01@outlook.com)

### ● Belfast International Brigade Commemoration Committee

Contact: Ernest and Lynda Walker  
[lyndaernest@btinternet.com](mailto:lyndaernest@btinternet.com)

### ● Hull International Brigades Memorial Group

Contact: Gary Hammond  
[thehutpeople@gmail.com](mailto:thehutpeople@gmail.com)

### ● Oxford International Brigades Memorial Committee

Contact: Colin Carritt  
[colin.carritt@tiscali.co.uk](mailto:colin.carritt@tiscali.co.uk)

International Brigade Memorial Trust

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

## BOOKS & THE ARTS

# Sonya, Melita and two International Brigaders

In a story of anti-fascism, espionage and betrayal, **PAULINE FRASER** recalls the real Sonya, the Soviet secret service agent portrayed in 'Red Joan', and her connections with former members of the British Battalion in Spain.

The recently-released film 'Red Joan' is said to be loosely based on the life of Melita Norwood, who was apprehended by MI5 in 1999. She had been passing state secrets to the Soviet Union for 40 years, most notably the secret of the atom bomb.

The film introduces us to Sonya, a Mata Hari character, described as a Comintern agent, who is sophisticated, cosmopolitan and completely ruthless. While Sonya, also known as Ruth Werner, birth name Ursula Kuczynski, led an exciting and dangerous life as an NKVD Soviet secret agent, she hardly fitted the caricature. I met Sonya, and husband Len Beurton, in East Berlin in the early 1990s, while on a visit with my parents. My father, Harry Fraser, knew Len from the British Battalion.

What will be of interest to IBMT members is that Ruth had also recruited Len as an anti-fascist spy in pre-war Germany.

In her autobiography, 'Sonya's Report', Ruth remembers coming to London in 1938 to make contact with former members of the British Battalion with a view to recruiting agents for the dangerous work of collecting intelligence in Nazi Germany.

Allan Foote was one who was approached and Len Beurton the other. Both agreed to undertake the mission.

Ruth met Foote, known as 'Jim', in Geneva and they had several intensive conversations. 'I took note of everything, every word, cadence, gesture, every facial expression,' she writes, 'and I pondered his reactions for a long time after we had parted.

'He grasped things quickly and asked sensible questions. He seemed resourceful and shrewd; that was an advantage for our work; in new and unaccustomed situations, Jim would react quickly. He had proved himself courageous and a good fighter in Spain, otherwise he would never have been proposed for this task.'

Foote was obviously held in high esteem by the battalion leadership, as official records note that he was: 'Battalion transport officer. Fred Copeman's "batman" according to Copeman. Jock Cunningham's driver at Jarama. Courier between London and the British Battalion in Spain. Sent on home leave on 1 September 1938.'

On first meeting Len Beurton, Ruth noted that the contrast between the two men was marked. 'Unlike Jim, he was not interested in material things and, again in contrast to Jim, he was extremely sensitive. When I told him that he had been chosen for dangerous work in Germany, his face lit up. He saw his new task as a continuation of his fight on Spanish soil, which had been the most important period of his life.

'When English and American International Brigaders visited the GDR [East Germany] for the first time, in 1959, they told me of Len's blind fearlessness,' Ruth added.

Len and Allan's mission to Nazi Germany was intelligence-gathering 'on the mood, morale and opinions of people they met', writes Sonya, 'and... the potential for sabotage'. Len was able to make visits to the trans-Atlantic Zeppelin, on show at Frankfurt Airport, where he made detailed notes,

**'Ruth remembers coming to London in 1938 to make contact with former members of the British Battalion with a view to recruiting agents for the dangerous work of collecting intelligence in Nazi Germany.'**

and discussed with her the potential for concealing incendiary material to blow it up. 'Jim was less than enthusiastic.' Their plan was overtaken by the imminence of war, and the two agents were recalled to Switzerland just before war was declared.

Prior to this, while the two were in Munich, they 'witnessed by chance the end of an SS parade in commemoration of fallen members of the Condor Legion,' Ruth writes.

'After the ceremony, Len and Jim were looking for somewhere to eat. Walking down the



▲ From left: Melita Norwood ('Red Joan'), Allan Foote and Ruth Werner ('Sonya') with Len Beurton.



▲ 'Red Joan' is a 2018 British spy drama film, directed by Trevor Nunn, from a screenplay by Lindsay Shapero.

Leopoldstrasse, they entered an inconspicuous restaurant. Near their table sat a pretty girl, dark-haired; a tall blonde entered; the two greeted each other coolly, sat together but did not converse. The door opened. Two large SS officers entered, behind them came Hitler. The owner greeted Hitler, who went into an adjoining room together with his entourage. Jim and Len were asked to put out their cigarettes, as the 'Führer' did not smoke. The brunette was Eva Braun... the blonde was Unity Mitford.'

The question of assassinating the Führer was discussed with NKVD centre, 'but before we could receive an answer, political events overtook us and eliminated this possibility.'

It appears that Allan Foote was a double agent also working for MI6. He published 'Handbook for Spies' in 1949 and gave information to MI5 that led to the arrest and trial in 1950 of scientist Klaus Fuchs, who served nine years in prison for passing information on the atom bomb to the Soviet Union.

'The facts that I know today about Jim the traitor and his infamous "Handbook for Spies" must not colour my view of him at that time,' Ruth comments.

Ruth ('Sonya') and husband Len had apparently been enjoying a quiet family life in England from 1941. They were hidden away in a ramshackle old farmhouse in the village of Great Rollright in Oxfordshire – perfect cover for Ruth's espionage. All that changed when Ruth heard of Fuchs's arrest. 'I prepared for my departure in great haste and left England. I believe it was on the 27th [of February], a day before the trial,' she writes.

Several British Brigaders kept clandestine contact with Spanish comrades after the defeat of the Spanish Republic and helped by smuggling leaflets into Spain. But were any others recruited to aid the Soviet Union and the anti-fascist cause in Europe?

*Pauline Fraser is an IBMT Trustee, based in Worthing.*

## You're an inspiration

I wanted to take a moment to tell you how wonderful your organisation is and how it inspires me.

My father was blacklisted for various things but mainly for raising money for the Abraham Lincoln Brigade. We don't seem to have near anything like you in the US\*. But I stumbled upon you a few years back and take extreme delight in both your printed and email newsletters!

They show me that there is so much to be learned from this important part of history, the courage of the righteous, and there are many creative ways to teach that and inspire action today to carry on that legacy.

In fact, your effort is part of my inspiration to do something about teaching people about the blacklists and red-baiting that went on in the US from 1940-1970... really it still goes on as Trump was mentored by Senator McCarthy's chief attorney, Roy Cohn.

So, well done and ¡No pasarán!

**Jack Holmgren**

Carmel, California

\* Our sister organisations in the US, ALBA and FFALB, do a fine job of keeping alive the memory of the Internationa Brigades – Editor.

## Words for a last resting place

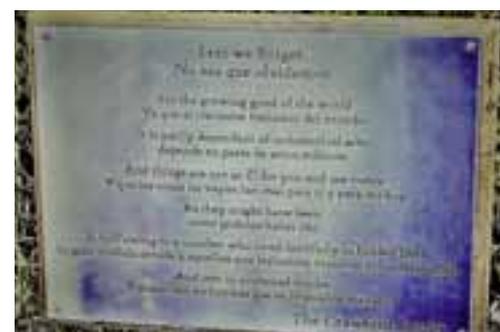
Please find a photo of the marker we put in Tarancón graveyard on behalf of the Crawford family, a promise I made to my father in 1984 in Madrid, as it was always a sore point with him when he was alive that we could not find the last resting place of his father, my grandfather.

The words are in Spanish and English and are from the book 'Middlemarch' by George Eliot (Mary Ann Evans), which I thought were quite apt for all the people far and wide like our family who never did find the last resting place of their loved ones.

Salud,

**Andy Crawford**

By email



# Tommy Moore and a forgotten memorial

By Stuart Walsh

The genesis of this piece is a visit to Moston Cemetery in Manchester by IBMT member Barrie Eckford, who was there with his wife attending to a family grave. While walking around, his eye just happened to catch sight of the inscription on the bottom part of a gravestone of the Moore family, which reads: 'Also Thomas, their beloved son, killed in action in Spain. Jan. 24th 1938. Aged 22 years'.

Barrie had been there many times before, and had never noticed the inscription before, so was surprised

**'I'm looking forward to returning to England some time next year, as I think by that time we will have given the Fascists, General Franco and Hitler more than they can take.'**

and delighted to come upon it in this fortuitous way. Who, then, was Thomas Moore, and what was the story of his time in Spain?

Thomas Moore, or Tommy as he was known to his friends in Manchester and Spain, was born in Ancoats in 1916. He was a cabinet-maker, very active in his trade union, and in the Young Communist League, in which he held the post of treasurer, and was also elected as an area committee member.

Without informing his family he

had made his way to Spain in July 1937, and he arrived there on 30 July. At Albacete, he trained as a light machine-gunner, and scout/observer. He obviously impressed his superior officers, and at the end of his training period he was recommended for officer training, but he declined this: 'No, I first want to prove myself as a private soldier,' and asked to be sent to the front. By all accounts, he was an excellent soldier, and saw action on the Aragón front, and at Teruel, where he was killed on 24 January 1938.

The circumstances of his death were described by fellow Brigader, friend and Mancunian Walter Greenhalgh in a local newspaper: 'The idea was for No.3 Company to act as the first stop to any projected attack by the enemy. When the attack was launched the companies made a fighting retreat, Moore and a few others with light machine-guns stood forward to cover the retreat of the main body. That is how he was killed.'

In a letter home dated 16 December 1937 Tommy had said: 'I'm looking forward to returning to England some time next year, as I think by that time we will have given the Fascists, General Franco and Hitler more than they can take.' Alas, it was not to be, and just over a month later he was dead, and, while he is memorialised on his family's gravestone in Moston Cemetery, his actual bones lie forever mixed with the Spanish earth.

Tommy Moore has a well stocked file at the Working Class Movement Library in Salford, which includes a number of letters to family and friends, and three illustrated postcard letters, which were produced by the International Brigade Commissariat. In one of these he mentions getting



▲ Sketch of Moore in Spain, artist unknown.



◀ The Moore family gravestone in Moston Cemetery.

his photograph taken while on leave in Madrid, though this does not seem to have survived. But we do have the remarkable drawing reproduced here, said to be the work of one of his comrades, which was also produced while he was on that Madrid leave.

Seeing Barrie's photograph set me thinking that there may be other cases like this. We are all aware of the growing list of memorials in our towns and cities. But do readers know of any other Brigaders who are memorialised on family gravestones like this? If so, do let the IBMT know.

*Stuart Walsh is a Manchester-based IBMT activist. He thanks Barrie Eckford and Terry Bayes for help with this article.*

# Merchandise from the IBMT

Proceeds help fund the commemorative, educational and publicity work of the International Brigade Memorial Trust.

Free postage & packing on goods totalling £30 or more for orders within the UK and Europe.

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.

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See the new products/special offers section on the website for discount deals on certain products.



**Football scarf:** In the colours of the Spanish Republic. Says ¡No pasarán! on one side, International Brigade Memorial Trust on the other. £12.99 plus £4.99 p&p.



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**Brooch in colours of the Spanish Republic:** Bespoke perspex laser-cut brooch designed for the IBMT in art deco style. 6cms x 4.5cms. £9.99 plus £3.99 p&p.



**Three-pointed star International Brigade brooch:** Bespoke perspex laser-cut brooch designed for the IBMT. 4.5cms x 6cms. £8.99 plus £3.99 p&p.



**Earrings in colours of the Spanish Republic:** Bespoke perspex laser-cut earrings designed for the IBMT in art deco style. 3cms x 2.25cms. £8.99 plus £3.99 p&p.



**Anti-fascist women's t-shirt:** Fitted t-shirt featuring names of British nurses who served in Spain. Made for the IBMT by t-shirt specialists Philosophy Football from ethically sourced cotton. 'International Brigade Memorial Trust' on sleeve. Available in **XXL** (size 18); **XL** (size 16); **L** (size 14); **M** (size 12). £19.99 plus £4.99 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). £19.99 plus £4.99 p&p.



**15th International Brigade t-shirt:** With flag of 15th International Brigade, which included British, Irish, American, Canadian and Commonwealth volunteers. '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). £19.99 plus £4.99 p&p.



**International Brigade flag:** Replica of the flag of the mainly English-speaking 15th International Brigade, which included the British Battalion. Based on the flag of the Spanish Republic. 150cms x 87cms. £10.99 plus £3.99 p&p.



**¡No Pasarán! bag:** Ethically sourced jute bag (30cms square, 18cms across). One side printed, other blank. Robust, useful for any shopping trip and a great way to show support for anti-fascism and the IBMT. £6.99 plus £2.99 p&p.



**Volunteers for Liberty plate:** Highly decorative commemorative plate made in Staffordshire by Heraldic Pottery exclusively for the IBMT. Fine bone china. 26.5cms 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: £24.99 plus £5.99 p&p.



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**IBMT badge:** Solid metal badge with International Brigade medal in centre and 'International Brigade Memorial Trust' around the edge. £3.99 plus £2.99 p&p.



**Tote bags:** One with image of International Brigaders, the other with the Spanish Republican flag. £6.99 each plus £3.99 p&p.



**Clenched fist sculpture:** Life-sized sculpture in specially treated concrete. Based on the clenched fist created by sculptor Betty Rae for the top of the pole of 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.

# THANK YOU

## to our **Friends** of 2019



- **Margarita M Asencio López** ● **Michael Bailey** dedicated to my grandfather, Bill Bailey, machine-gunner in the Abraham Lincoln Brigade
- **Meaghan Buchanan** in memory of Stanley James Buchanan, XV Brigade volunteer from Winnipeg, Canada
- **RE & Helen Cadman** in memory of Capt George Fletcher
- **Audrey Canning** in memory of Charlie Goodfellow of North Lanarkshire, who fought and died in the Spanish Civil War, with the support of the Goodfellow family
- **Brian Carroll**
- **Alex Clifford** ● **Megan Dobney** ● **Paul Elliott** ● **Pauline Fraser** dedicated to my father Harry Fraser, his best friend Sam Pearson, killed at the Ebro in 1938, and Fred Thomas and all the other Hackney volunteers
- **Thelma Frye** in memory of my late husband and International Brigader Peter Frye
- **AP Gordon** ● **William Gordon** ● **Mary Greening** ● **Robert Hargreaves**
- **Gilbert Hartle** ● **John Haywood** dedicated to George Green, killed at the Ebro in September 1938, and his widow and fellow International Brigader Nan Green, later Secretary of the International Brigade Association
- **Myra Hunter** ● **Jim Jump** in memory of James R Jump and his comrades in Spain, in particular George Jackson, from Keltly, Fife, killed at the Ebro in August 1938
- **Sean Kettle**
- **Rajesh Kulkarni** ● **Denis Lenihan** ● **Alan Lloyd** ● **Kevin Lowe** dedicated to Dorothy Lowe, volunteer nurse in Spain
- **Herminio Martínez** ● **John Mitchell** dedicated to my great uncle Ernst Wolff of the Thälmann Battalion
- **Manuel Moreno** dedicated to Spanish Republicans exiled in Britain
- **Marlene Pink** ● **Stephen Pulley** in memory of my political mentor Frank West, International Brigader and Shepherd's Bush Branch Secretary of the Amalgamated Society of Woodworkers (now Unite)
- **Joanne Seery** ● **Tom Sibley** dedicated to the memory of Bert Ramelson, member of the Mackenzie-Papineau Battalion
- **Marlene Sidaway** dedicated to International Brigader David Marshall
- **Phillip Walden** ● **Neil Williamson**

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Donate £50 a year or more 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 or others associated with the fight against fascism in Spain, this will be published along with your name. We will write to you to ask for a dedication. We'll also send you an exclusive Friend of the IBMT badge to wear with pride.

● Send a cheque for at least £50 made out to the IBMT, along with your name and contact details, to: IBMT, 37a Clerkenwell Green, London EC1R 0DU. If you are a UK taxpayer and wish to

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Thank you for your support. ¡No pasarán!



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