



¡NO PASARÁN!

International Brigade Memorial Trust • 3-2023 • £5

From the Scottish isles to Spain





INTERNATIONAL BRIGADE MEMORIAL TRUST



ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The IBMT's 2023 AGM will take place on Saturday 7 October, as part of a weekend of commemorative, educational and social activities in Stockton-on-Tees.

Provisional programme

Friday 6 October

- Evening: Reception at the Unite the Union office in Middlesbrough (Fry Street, Middlesbrough TS1 1HA).

Saturday 7 October

- 12am: commemoration at the Stockton International Brigade memorial at Wasp Nest Yard, off Calvert Lane and Silver Street.
- 2.30pm: Annual General Meeting at the Georgian Theatre, Green Dragon Yard, Stockton-on-Tees TS18 1AT.
- Evening: social with music at the Georgian Theatre.

Sunday 8 October

- Morning: walking tour of sites associated with Stockton's anti-fascist history.

Attendees are asked to confirm by 25 September whether they will be attending the Unite reception on Friday evening by writing to IBMT Secretary Megan Dobney at: secretary@international-brigades.org.uk.

Agenda

The main items on the AGM agenda include approving the annual report and accounts and electing members of the Executive Committee. The AGM will also approve the minutes of the 2022 AGM and discuss any matters arising. The Executive Committee will in addition propose a number of amendments to the IBMT constitution. Details are available on the IBMT website.

Proposals for agenda item 'Any Other Business' must be received in writing by the Secretary (see above) by 8am on 30 September.

Notice of nominations

Nominations are invited for candidates to fill five vacancies on the EC. If necessary, a ballot will be held among members attending the AGM.

The five vacancies arise because John Haywood/David Chanter (jobshare), Paul Coles, Alex Gordon and Jonathan Havard will have completed their terms of office by the AGM and they will therefore step down and an election, in which they are permitted to stand, along with other IBMT members, will take place. In addition, James Bentley has stepped down from the EC.

All IBMT members may nominate fellow members to serve on the EC. Nominations must be made in writing and received by the Secretary by 8am on 23 September.

The names of the candidates will be published on the IBMT website in advance of the AGM.

Send nominations and proposed agenda items by email (these will be acknowledged) to: secretary@international-brigades.org.uk or by post to: IBMT Secretary, 37a Clerkenwell Green, London EC1R 0DU.

Hotels

Stockton

- Hampton by Hilton is a five-minute walk away from the Georgian Theatre, where we will be meeting on Saturday.
- The Parkwood Hotel is a five-minute drive away from Stockton town centre.

Middlesbrough

- The Leonardo Hotel and Premier Inn Town Centre are less than a two-minute walk to the Unite office, where there will be a reception on Friday evening.

IBMT, 37a Clerkenwell Green, London EC1R 0DU ● 07865 272 639
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◀ Liam Turbett at the grave of Scottish International Brigader Robert Milton in Brodick New Cemetery, Isle of Arran. See page 21.

6 Discovery

● Tony Fox identifies a Teesside Brigader

8 The Ebro

● Dolores Long reflects on the Battle of the Ebro 85 years on

10 Medical

● Peter Crome details battlefield medical innovations on the battlefields of the Ebro.

13 Graves

● Daniel Palacios González on the anti-fascist history of commemorating mass graves

15 Tony Babich

● John Cunningham restores the reputation of a Canadian volunteer

17 Books

● Reviews of 'Island Brigaders', 'Remembering Spain', 'The Charmed Life of Sam Wild' and 'The Selected Poems of Clive Branson'

22 Final word

● Letter from John Gates reporting the death of Brigade commissar Humfray Scott.

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International Brigade Memorial Trust

www.international-brigades.org.uk

Andrew Ward.



IBMT member Paul Ward lays a wreath and performs a raised fist salute.

Annual commemoration celebrates Brigaders' spirit of solidarity

On 1 July some 200 supporters gathered at the International Brigade memorial in London's Jubilee Gardens at the South Bank. They came to pay their respects to the 2,500 volunteers from Britain and Ireland who fought fascism in the Spanish Civil War.

This year's guest speakers included Nancy Wallach, daughter of Lincoln Brigader Hy Wallach and board member of the New York-based Abraham Lincoln Brigade Archives (ALBA) and Claude Desmazure, representative of the Paris-based ACER (Les Amis des Combattants en Espagne Républicaine).

Professor Peter Crome spoke about the role of the medical staff during the Battle of the Ebro, whose anniversary falls this year. Peter is an IBMT Patron and the son of Dr Len Crome, who was head of the International Brigades medical services (see pages 10-11 for an edited version of his talk).

The other speakers at the Jubilee Gardens event were IBMT Secretary Megan Dobney, President Marlene Sidaway and Chair Jim Jump.

Speakers

Thanking the foreign speakers for their contributions, Jump said they had reminded everyone that the volunteers who went to Spain had joined the *International Brigades*.

He added: 'Their solidarity, their anti-fascism and their values knew no frontiers, whether they were from the US, France, Britain, Ireland, Germany, Italy, Poland, Ethiopia, India, China or wherever.'

Music was provided by folk-duo and long-standing friends and supporters of the IBMT, Na-Mara. There was a minute's silence and a rendition of 'Jarama Valley' after wreaths had

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▲ Rose placed by IBMT supporter on the Jubilee Gardens International Brigade memorial's plaque.



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

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Other Executive Committee members

James Bentley, David Chanter, Alex Gordon, John

Haywood, Jonathan Havard, Alan Lloyd,

Dolores Long, Luke O'Riordan

Founding Chair Professor Sir Paul Preston

Patrons Professor Peter Crome, Professor Helen

Graham, Ken Livingstone, Len McCluskey, Christy

Moore, Jack O'Connor, Maxine Peake, Baroness

Royall of Blaisdon, Mick Whelan

Historical Consultant Richard Baxell

NEWS

Annual commemoration

FROM PREVIOUS PAGE

been laid – the event closing with the singing of 'The Internationale'.

Nancy Wallach's speech emphasised the deep sense of solidarity that epitomised the actions of the Lincolns and the other International Brigade volunteers. Quoting a tribute to the American volunteers by film director John Sayles, she said their values ran counter to today's cynical view that people are only motivated by self-interest and greed. Her words are reproduced here:

It is a great honour to join you today, and to bring you greetings from ALBA, the Abraham Lincoln Brigade Archives. Now, more than ever, in these times, the work that we do as sister organisations is needed, the important task of recovering and disseminating the neglected history of the International Brigades, so that new generations can use their example and their lessons to continue to struggle and resist.

When people learn of these international volunteers, thanks to our work, and through events such as this very one today, they are invariably inspired by their legacy of anti-fascist unity and unprecedented working-class solidarity.

I'd like to share with you the effect they had on one member of the next generation, the film maker John Sayles. Many of you may know his films, such as 'Matewan', 'Eight Men Out', 'Passion Fish', 'The Secret of Roan Inish', 'Lone Star', 'The Brother From Another Planet' and 'The Return of the Seacaucus Seven'.

Sayles was the keynote speaker at the 50th anniversary of the Abraham Lincoln Brigade, during the Reagan-Thatcher era, an era when greed and self-interest were extolled as top virtues and the catchphrase 'Greed is Good' prevailed.

His address was entitled 'But What About the Guys in the Lincoln Brigade?', but it applies equally to the British Battalion, the Connolly Column, the Garibaldi, the Thaelmann Battalion, the Edgar André Battalion and each and every one of the battalions in the International Brigades.

This is what Sayles said:

One of the major obstacles in the way of human progress, of human understanding is cynicism. The cynicism that states that people only act in their own self-interest or what they believe to be their self interest, that says within every seemingly altruistic act there lurks a dark core of greed or hatred or fear.

To make people behave, the cynics say, to make society work, you have to know how to exploit and manipulate that dark core. That's life, the cynics say, that's just the way people are. And you can listen to this for a while, and maybe agree up to a point, but then you say: 'What about the guys in the Lincoln Brigade?'.

Then the cynics will go to work and talk about raw youth and misplaced idealism and what this faction did to that faction. But they won't go away, those guys who shipped out for Spain to fight for other people's freedom. They stand up in history like the one tree on a battlefield not levelled by the bombing. stand up and make you ask: 'How did that happen?'. They won't go away.



If you talk to them or read their accounts, what you hear again and again is that they went to Spain because of a belief in what people could be, in how people could live together, and they put their lives on the line for that belief and a lot of them died.

'But they lost,' say the cynics, not knowing that it is more important that they fought – fought when they didn't have to fight, fought when it brought no public glory in their home towns, fought to put a lie to the cynicism that keeps people in darkness.

They won't go away... and in a world run by cynics, in a time when caring about someone

'They went to Spain because of a belief in what people could be, in how people could live together, and they put their lives on the line for that belief'.

you've never met is seen as weakness or treachery, how much strength have we taken from the thought of them, how much pride and comfort to be able to say: 'But what about the guys in the International Brigades?'.

Let us resolve to continue our work, so that there may be many more generations of people like John Sayles out there, taking heart and inspiration from the example of the International Brigades. *La Lucha continúa!*



- ▲ Clockwise from top left:
- Nancy Wallach (ALBA).
 - Claude Desmazure (ACER).
 - Peter Crome, IBMT Patron and son of Len Crome.
 - Folk-duo Na-Mara perform International Brigade songs.
 - Supporter lays a rose on the International Brigade memorial.
 - Attendees sing along to 'The Internationale'.



Your local IBMT affiliated 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.

IBMT affiliation costs £30. You can affiliate through our website here: www.international-brigades.org.uk/membership.

DIRECTORY

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International Brigade Memorial Trust

www.international-brigades.org.uk

6 ¡NO PASARÁN!

DISCOVERY

Another Teesside



Bill Meredith/Ron Dennison and Bob Elliot pictured in Spain, early 1937.

We held our first Volunteers for Liberty event on Teesside in October 2020, as part of the Communist Party's centenary commemorations. In Middlesbrough we read out seven names of local volunteers on the Teesside International Brigade Memorial that we confirmed came from the area.

Last year, in October 2022, I added an eighth name to the list. Edward Petrie, born in Middlesbrough in 1914 to a Jewish family, arrived in Spain with the Independent Labour Party group led by Bob Edwards. He left this group and joined the British Battalion on 11 February 1937 and was killed during the Battle of Brunete later that year. This October, when we hold our Volunteers for Liberty in Spain commemoration in Stockton, I'll be

adding another name to the list.

I began researching the names and background behind the Teesside International Brigade memorial after I was commissioned by the local council to write a leaflet about it.

With invaluable assistance from Stuart Hill, this research uncovered much more of the remarkable story of the loss, discovery and rededication of the plaque. However, many questions still remain.

Memorial

Chiefly, it seems odd that three Tyneside volunteers are named on the memorial which says 'they went out to fight from TEES-SIDE'. Tragically the records for the Teesside Communist Party were destroyed in the early 1970s, which means we can only speculate as

fighter confirmed

TONY FOX details his research on the British Battalion volunteer called Bill Meredith/Ron Dennison, proving his connection to Teesside.

to why Ron Dennison from Bellingham, Bob Elliott from Blyth and Wilf Jobling from Chopwell were included. Both Wilf Jobling, the North East Coast District Secretary and Councillor Bob Elliott were well known on Teesside, but Ron Dennison is much different.

Dennison used the pseudonym Bill Meredith in Spain. Arriving as part of the 14 January 1937 transport at the Battle of Jarama, he was a section leader in Harold Fry's No.2 Company. He gave a first-hand account of the capture of part of the Machine-gun Company: 'As I came closer I was surprised to see a large contingent of fascists crossing the ground between them and ourselves, singing 'The Internationale' and giving the anti-fascist clenched fist salute.'

Bill Meredith wrote the British Battalion diary and took over command of No.2 Company. He can be seen in a number of photographs, most notably in one from the

'[Bill] was a member of the Labour Party, very conscientious, anxious to become a good officer and even more anxious to make a contribution to the Republic.'

Tamiment Library's collection of the 15th International Brigade's Photographic Unit, which shows an inspection in the trenches at Jarama.

Bill Meredith was killed on 6 July 1937 at Villanueva de la Cañada. An account of the tragic event was recorded by Fred Copeman in his autobiography 'Reason in Revolt' (1948):

'A runner from No.2 company reported that Bill Meredith had been killed. I couldn't believe it. I had only spoken to him a moment before. Bill was very sentimental but had a heart of gold. He was a member of the Labour

Party, very conscientious, anxious to become a good officer, and even more anxious to make a contribution to the Republic. He had gone to help a wounded man lying in the road. Bending over in the semi-darkness, he received a bullet in the heart. The lad who reported it was sobbing like a kid. I didn't feel at all nice myself...A bloke was lying on the road calling. And by now the only light was the flames from the village. Bill Meredith went over to help him and it was one of these fascists, as old Bill bent over to help him the fascist shot him.'

Renewed

My interest in Bill Meredith/Ron Dennison was renewed last year when, just a few days after presenting information on Edward Petrie at the Volunteers for Liberty event, I was in the Teesside Archives. Amongst these documents was an interview where leading local Communist Party organiser George

Short said Ron Dennison had joined the Communist Party after he had been charged with obstruction and the Hartlepool Police had beaten him up. He also said that in Stockton, Ron had a taxi fleet that included Rolls Royces. I was pleased I had finally established his link to Teesside.

IBMT Archivist Alan Lloyd is carrying out a wonderful job of updating the IBMT's database, originally produced by Jim Carmody and Richard Baxell, of all known British and Irish volunteers. Thus I asked Alan for help in my research into Dennison and presented him with my circumstantial evidence, which included registers of births.

Alan came back the next day saying Dennison wasn't born in Bellingham but

'Ron Dennison had joined the Communist Party after he had been charged with obstruction and the Hartlepool Police had beaten him up.'

Stockton-on-Tees in October 1912. I found a birth registered in Billingham for a Joseph Ronald Dennison in October 1912; Billingham births are registered as Stockton-on-Tees.

Tommy's plaque rightly had Ron Dennison as a Teesside volunteer, from now onwards we'll commemorate him as such.

Bill Meredith/Ron Dennison (first from left) during a trench inspection on the Jarama front.



Tamiment Library

The cutting to pieces of our very bravest

DOLORES LONG, daughter of Sam Wild, the last commander of the British Battalion, describes the horrors of the Ebro through eyewitness accounts from those who fought in the battle and who vowed to continue their fight against fascism.



◀ Memorial to the British Battalion dead at El Pinell de Brai, near Gandesa.

Two things had a huge effect on me in understanding what the Battle of the Ebro must have been like for the volunteers from 25 July to 23 September 1938. One was going to the area where the fighting took place: the horrendously difficult terrain, huge bare mountains with no shade or cover and stifling heat. The other is the recollections of the Brigaders of that tragic last battle; recollections and images that stay in the mind.

Walter Gregory describes: 'Twelve hours of lying on rocky soil, every fragment intent on burying itself into our bodies, of being continually shot at, of having nothing to eat or drink, of being driven half-mad by the ceaseless attention of the most malevolent flies in the whole of Spain.'

Another person recalled: 'From the 25 July to the morning of the 30 July they had nothing to drink but a little water, sometimes going for a day without this. They are fighting and marching over mountains, the rocks of which have cut their Spanish shoes to pieces. Many are literally barefoot as well as being in rags. Nobody has had a wash since the start of the offensive.'

Recalled

First-aider Alun Menai Williams recalled: 'It was the worst time in the war. Not for terror, I'd got over that. The agony of the Pandols was that I couldn't do much for the wounded. Day and night we were being bombarded by aircraft, mortars, shelling and there was no cover. The casualties were horrendous. It was a big, open-air abattoir.'

On 5 October the members of the British Battalion bid a painful farewell to their Spanish comrades who were returning to the front to fight. My father, Sam Wild, presented the Battalion banners to the Spanish commander, Captain Cipriano. 200 Republican soldiers formed lines and sang the Republican national anthem as the battalion set off back to the front.

Edwin Greening watched the scene through

floods of tears: 'Finally, the now completely Spanish 35th Division formed ranks and marched to the west, back to the Ebro holocaust, while we foreign volunteers marched in the opposite direction, towards the east.'

Fred Thomas describes how he sat in a lorry with a friend on the way to Barcelona: 'We sat somberly, sadness and joyous relief making a hash of our emotions. If either of us wondered what had been achieved since we went over that pontoon bridge on 26 July the thought remained unspoken.'

Harry Pollitt, Communist Party General Secretary, described how: 'Their clothes were torn to shreds; they had a fortnight's beard. It was difficult to make out who was who.'

Peter Kerrigan, in a letter to Pollitt, wrote: 'I will never forget when I was told what our casualties were at Jarama. But nothing can compare with the end of our battalion: it was the cutting to pieces of our very bravest.'

'The Brigaders' feelings of defeat and the deep sadness of leaving their Spanish comrades to carry on the fight remain in the mind.'

Those images of the battle, the Brigaders' feelings of defeat and the deep sadness of leaving their Spanish comrades to carry on the fight remain in the mind. On leaving Spain the Battalion made the following pledge:

'We are returning to our respective countries not for celebrations in our honour, not to rest, but to continue the fight we helped to wage in Spain. The British Battalion is prepared to carry on the work begun here to ensure that our 500 comrades who sleep forever beneath the Spanish soil shall serve as

an example to the entire British people in the struggle against Fascism. We intend to keep the promise we made to the Spanish people before we left. We are merely changing the front on which we fight and the weapons that we use.'

In differing ways the majority of the volunteers kept that pledge.

I will conclude with extracts from two poems; a Republican soldier and a Scottish Brigader looking beyond the horrors of the civil war with a sense of hope and optimism. Miguel Hernández was captured in battle, imprisoned and died of tuberculosis. Before his death he wrote:

*If I die, may I die
with my head held high.
my mouth against the wild grass,*

*I will have my teeth clenched
and my jaw resolute.
for there are nightingales that sing
above the guns.*

Bob Cooney, my father's lifelong friend, wrote these words in the 1960s when Franco was still in power. He looks back but also forward, to the day when Franco is gone and he can return to a liberated Spain:

*We will stroll in the Puerta del Sol
And the Ramblas of Barcelona
We will cross the Ebro
And drink with our friends in Mora
Friends who'll be free!
We will look at them
And at each other
And each of us will think
This is why I came in 36...
I went to Spain!
And because of that great yesterday
I am part of the greater tomorrow.*

iNo Pasarán! Raffle 2023



Raffle draw
7 October
2023

FIRST PRIZE £500 in cash

SECOND PRIZE Six bottles of
Spanish wine

PLUS MANY OTHER RUNNER-UP PRIZES

Supporters can buy
tickets (£1 per ticket)
for the online raffle
via RallyUp:

[https://go.rallyup.com
/nopasaran](https://go.rallyup.com/nopasaran)



SCAN ME

The outbreak of the Spanish Civil War was a pivotal moment not only in Spain but throughout the world. The IBMT remembers all those who went to Spain from Britain to support the Spanish Republic, amongst whom were a substantial number who went to provide medical, nursing and other humanitarian services.

Local fundraising for food and medical supplies took place throughout the UK.

Organisations such as the Spanish Medical Aid Committee were established soon after the outbreak of the war and their first team left for Spain in August 1936 and established a hospital. The first Scottish Ambulance Unit went out in September 1936.

Medical teams came from all over the world, including large contingents from the United States. In the spring of 1937, most of the different national teams had been incorporated into the International Brigades, with doctors and nurses from different countries working together and in partnership with Spanish doctors and nurses.

Those who went to provide medical aid as non-combatants, just like those who went to fight, came from all sectors of British society and included, not just nurses and doctors, but also ambulance staff, drivers, mechanics and

‘Those who went to provide medical aid as non-combatants, just like those who went to fight, came from all sectors of British society.’

administrators. I must mention Nan Green, the administrator who worked with my father, Len Crome, and who ran the International Brigade Association for many years.

Not all of those in medical services were ‘lefties’. They held different political and religious views and many went for humanitarian reasons. An example was the Quaker Nathan Clark, of the Clark shoe factory who is credited with designing the desert boot. Many wrote memoirs of their experiences and oral and documentary testimony has resulted in numerous books and articles.

I had the privilege of meeting many of the volunteers and a number became long-lasting family friends.

These included Janette Opman from France, František Kriegel from Czechoslovakia and Carl Coutelle from the GDR. The British volunteer Alex Tudor-Hart was the family GP for a while.

Two volunteers have special relevance to the site of the International Brigade memorial on the



Max Memorial Library.

Saving lives

PETER CROME, son of Len Crome – head of the International Brigade medical services, discusses innovations in battlefield surgery achieved during the civil war. This is an edited version of the talk he gave at the IBMT’s annual commemoration on 1 July 2023.

South Bank and the area opposite the Houses of Parliament. Larry Collier, then a medical student, became Lord Monkswell but gave up his peerage without taking his seat in the House of Lords. One of the most surreal experiences I had was when I

went with him and his family to the ancient ceremony of disclaiming a peerage in the rather grand office of the Clerk of the Crown in Chancery. Sadly we lost a voice in the House of Lords. There was also Chris Thornycroft, who provided



◀ Clockwise from far left:

- Reginald Saxton performing a blood transfusion in the cave hospital near Bisbal de Falset in July 1938. The patient is Welsh Brigader Harry Dobson, who died later that day from wounds received on Hill 481.
- Unknown Brigader undergoing a blood transfusion in the cave hospital.
- Harry Dobson undergoing a blood transfusion with Leah Manning (left) and Ada Hobson (right).
- People and equipment in the cave hospital.

more than one occasion, apply antiseptic, leave open and immobilise. The techniques had to be learned again in the Second World War, to leave the wounds to heal from the bottom up.

Blood transfusions: Blood banks were established before engagements. Blood was collected from the civilian population, who received food vouchers in exchange for their donation. Norman Bethune from Canada was associated with the development of blood banks and from Britain there was Reggie Saxton, a doctor who served with the British Medical Unit and was a stalwart supporter of progressive causes until his death in 2004.

Stretchers: These were standardised, designed in a way so that they were raised from the ground

CONTINUED OVERLEAF

at the Ebro

engineering services to the medical units and who was a descendent of the Thornycrofts who sculpted the statues of Boudica and of Oliver Cromwell just over the river.

Many of those from the UK serving in the medical services were students or, if qualified, were very junior and even fewer had undertaken military service. I don't know if any spoke Spanish. Len Crome had only been qualified for three years when he arrived in Spain and later became head of medical services of the 15th Army Corps that fought at the northern end of the Battle of the Ebro. He attributed his promotion not to his skills as a doctor but to the fact that he spoke several languages and

could communicate with the generals.

The doctors and other health workers had to learn quickly, and indeed they did so. By the time of the Battle of Ebro in 1938, the medical services were better prepared and the medical advances were some of which now seem obvious.

Wound care: The traditional way of dealing with wounds was to stitch them up. This had the great effect of promoting gas gangrene, amputations and death. The Spanish method, associated with Josep Trueta (who later moved to the UK and became a professor in Oxford) was to lay the wound open, wash it, remove all dead tissue and contaminating material – if necessary on

FROM PREVIOUS PAGE

so wounds would not get contaminated and could slot into lorries and trains for transportation. They were light and could fold so that they could be carried by one person and had a raised head so that, when not used for a patient, staff could sleep on them.

Lorries: These were converted to contain operating tables, autoclaves, fridges for storing blood and their own generators for providing light. Often there would be two operations going on at the same time, with a single anaesthetist going between the two patients.

The key to the management of battle injuries was the physical organisation of the evacuation of the injured.

First-aid posts were established 300-700 metres behind the front line. Morphine and vaccinations were given and dressings and tourniquets were applied. Then the injured were taken by ambulance or mule to a classification point. There, a doctor would practice triage and people were sent to first-line or second-line hospitals depending on the severity of the wound. It was at these hospitals that major surgery was undertaken. Further back were base hospitals.

‘Lessons were learned in Spain but those on how best to manage battle injuries were lost and had to be relearned in the Second World War.’

The hospitals were located in any suitable place that had not been bombed.

These included quarries, caves and tunnels. The front at the Battle of the Ebro was not static. It went forwards and backwards and the hospitals had to move. Sometimes the front line services were behind the second line services! The hospitals also had to cope with ‘ordinary’ diseases such as tuberculosis and typhoid, which were common at that time in Spain.

The most iconic and best-described medical facility was the Santa Lluçia cave hospital established in the village of La Bisbal de Falset. I had the privilege of visiting the cave and unveiling a commemorative plaque. There are several

published descriptions of its operation and videos are available of it on YouTube.

If you visit you will see boards which tell the story of the hospital. It had between 80 and 100 low camp beds for the patients, who included British, Spanish and other International Brigaders as well as prisoners of war.

Triaged

Wounded soldiers were triaged, with the less serious being sent further away. Len had been reprimanded by General Walter for suggesting this approach previously.

Patience Darton writes about struggles trying to retrieve blankets from the dead so that she could use them for the living.

There was a blood transfusion laboratory housed in a lorry, with the transfusions supervised by Reggie Saxton.

Lessons were learned in Spain but those on how best to manage battle injuries were lost and had to be relearned in the Second World War. Many if not all of the doctors who went to Spain, later served in the Royal Army Medical Corps and had to reintroduce the techniques that they adopted in Spain.

Len was proud to have served in Spain and proud to have been part of the international effort to fight fascism. However, he said the people who deserved the most praise were the ordinary people of Spain, particularly the women and children, who suffered so much during and after the war.



◀◀ Len Crome (1901-2001) went to Spain with the Scottish Ambulance Unit before joining the International Brigades.

◀▼ Approach to and inside the Bisbal de Falset cave hospital, which served the Ebro front.





TRIBUTES: Act of remembrance on the mass grave at La Carolina in the province of Jaén, 1978.

The politics of mourning

Historian **DANIEL PALACIOS GONZÁLEZ** describes how local communities in Spain tended the mass graves of Republicans killed during the civil war and fascist dictatorship.

One of the most media-promoted events related to the history of the Spanish Civil War and the subsequent dictatorship was the exhumation, in 2000, of a mass grave in Priaranza del Bierzo. This event was treated in Spain as a starting point in the so-called Recovery of Historical Memory. But was this so? Nothing could be further from the truth; the memory of mass graves has a history that began decades ago when mourning and anti-fascist resistance became the same thing.

I start from the notion that is probably agreed upon by all of this magazine's readers: that Franco's fascist forces and dictatorship instituted a plan for systematically eliminating entire social groups. Irregular burials in mass graves were frequent in the war, and progressively organised mass graves were dug in the cemeteries of the municipalities where the murders occurred.

But there is another part of the story not disclosed. After the murders, these sites began to be marked by the local community, especially women related to the murdered: daughters, widows, mothers and sisters. Stones were often placed, sometimes crosses, but mostly floral offerings.

Sometimes, these were clandestine actions, but at other times, women openly defied the dictatorship authorities to go to the graves and bring flowers. Over time, workers' and anti-fascist political organisations began reorganising within the political underground.

Activities

Among their clandestine activities was returning to the mass graves. They hid flowers under their coats and convened in small groups, leaving them around the mass graves. These were the first steps

towards the establishment of monuments. Ephemeral actions set the precedent for subverting this instrument of terror and changing the meaning of the mass graves, as the living sought their place in history.

'They hid their flowers under their coats and convened in small groups, leaving them around the mass graves.'

It was in the post-Franco transition period of the 1970s when the real explosion of this phenomenon would begin: the establishment of hundreds of self-maintained monuments on the mass graves. The transition implied, among other concessions on the part of democratic political organisations, a Pact of Forgetting. The crimes of fascism and dictatorship were kept hidden, and there would be no official programmes of remembrance in Spain whereby public monuments were built.

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MEMORY

FROM PREVIOUS PAGE

Local communities made them instead. They were relatives of the murdered, neighbours and political and trade union activists. They organised themselves and put into practice their own politics of memory. Thus they began to build monuments: monoliths, obelisks, sculptures and gardens, in the same places where, 40 years earlier, their executed ancestors and comrades had been buried.

It was an open challenge to the official history and the regime's structures that survived the transition. That is why, in many cases, those who campaigned for these monuments suffered threats and there was always fear of aggression from

fascists, police and military authorities. These monuments exist all over Spain – there are hundreds of them, yet the mass media has largely ignored them. Nevertheless, they became places where relatives and militants developed acts of homage and commemoration every year.

Decades later, in the 2000s, many things changed with the advent of exhumation programmes. The 'forensic turn' was superimposed on the value of the monuments. The idea of honour and the political struggle of the murdered gave way to that of dignity and victimhood. However, this neoliberal turn in the politics of memory was unsatisfactory on a local level.

Although the mainstream media still does not give visibility to the phenomenon, there are hundreds of failed exhumations. Often, the bodies sought have not been found, or it has not been possible to identify the murdered. Therefore, again, monuments have been built. But these monuments are not just a pragmatic solution.

Politicisation

They also imply the politicisation of the bodies of the murdered in the face of individualism and depoliticised archaeological and forensic science. As in the years of the transition, the image of the grave as a sign of terror is changed to a monument as a sign of honour. An embellished place where tributes are paid, and flowers are offered.

Today, some of these sites are being recognised by local governments as 'sites of memory'. However, the lack of political commitment leads to the continued campaigning for the exhumation of the

'They began to build monuments in the same places where, 40 years earlier, their executed ancestors and comrades had been buried.'

graves privately, individualising, depoliticising, and victimising those who 80 years ago were killed for explicitly political reasons.

Local monuments represent a challenge from below to this neoliberal desire for oblivion. But the monuments are a means, not an end. Their campaigners are not simply giving a sort of burial to the dead; they are writing popular history on the territory itself. Thus the dead, from their monuments, dictate to the living a political duty to accomplish in the present, for the sake of the future.

▲▼ Monument at a mass grave near the village of Sobrepiedra in Asturias, pictured in 2019.

◀▼ The 'women in black', a group led by women from La Rioja whose relatives were murdered during the civil war and dictatorship, who held commemorations at the mass grave of La Barranca, near Logroño, throughout the Franco period.

◀ A commemoration held at the La Barranca public cemetery and memorial, built on top of the mass graves in the late 1970s, 1 May 2009. Asociación para la Preservación de la Memoria Histórica en La Rioja.



Restoring the reputation of a Canadian volunteer

If the Croatian-Canadian International Brigade volunteer Tony Babich is remembered at all nowadays it is usually for just one thing and then only in passing. On arrival in Spain, his passport was taken from him by the Soviet NKVD (People's Commissariat for Internal Affairs), sent to Moscow to be altered and was then used by Frank Jacson (real name Ramón Mercader) to enter the United States and then Mexico. On 21 August 1940 Mercader assassinated Leon Trotsky.

Tony's story needs to be told. He was born Anto Babić in Lovinac, Croatia on 12 May 1905. No doubt due to poverty he migrated to Canada on 12 April 1925 and lived in Vancouver, British Columbia working as a miner. He adopted Canadian citizenship sometime in 1929 and it is probably around this time that he 'anglicised' his name.

In 1936 he joined the Communist Party of Canada; shortly afterwards he must have been recruited for the International Brigade.

A number of Croatian volunteers were recruited from the Croatian Fraternal Union, a benefit society dating back to 1893. In terms of occupation, of 815 Canadian volunteers surveyed, the largest group were 136 miners (according to Michael Petrou).

The Canadians were a tough bunch; many of them worked in British Columbia as itinerant lumberjacks and miners and they fought like lions. Five per cent of the Canadian volunteers for Spain were Croatian-Canadian (63 in total).

'The Canadians were a tough bunch; many of them worked in British Columbia as itinerant lumberjacks and miners and they fought like lions.'

A Canadian passport was issued to Tony Babich in March 1937 and he arrived in Spain on 4 July 1937. On arrival his passport was taken from him by NKVD officials.

This was not an uncommon procedure and

JOHN CUNNINGHAM tells the story of Tony Babich/Anto Babić, whose memory was unfairly tarnished when his passport was used by the assassin of Leon Trotsky.



Croatian State Archive in Rijeka

▲ Croatian-Canadian volunteers of the Dimitrov Battalion, of which Tony Babich was a member.

Canadian passports were much sought after by the NKVD as they provided a route for their agents – via the 'back door' – into the USA. Taking away passports was unpopular with the volunteers as, according to Professor Kevin Riehle, 'many International Brigade volunteers complained that their passports were confiscated and never returned'.

Most Canadian volunteers went into the famous Mac-Paps Battalion named after William Lyon Mackenzie and Louis Joseph Papineau, who led the rebellion of 1837-8 in Canada. However, given his ethnic background it was logical that Tony Babich should be assigned to the Dimitrov Battalion, part of the 15th Brigade, which

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TONY BABICH

FROM PREVIOUS PAGE

consisted mainly of volunteers from the Balkans.

At the Battle of Jarama the Dimitrov Battalion suffered terrible casualties, though Tony Babich did not arrive in time to participate in this crucial fight.

The remnants of the Dimitrovs were then assimilated into the 129th and later the 13th Brigade. He was likely a part of the Matija Gubec

‘Tony Babich should be remembered as one of this esteemed group, not as the man who supplied Leon Trotsky’s assassin with a passport from beyond the grave.’

Company, named after a Croatian national hero who led a peasants’ uprising against the Austrian monarchy in 1573. According to Ivan Gosnjak, ‘the first section of the Matija Gubec Company of the Dimitrov Battalion is almost wholly composed of comrades coming from Canada. These comrades are in the main, Croats who were compelled by economic circumstances to

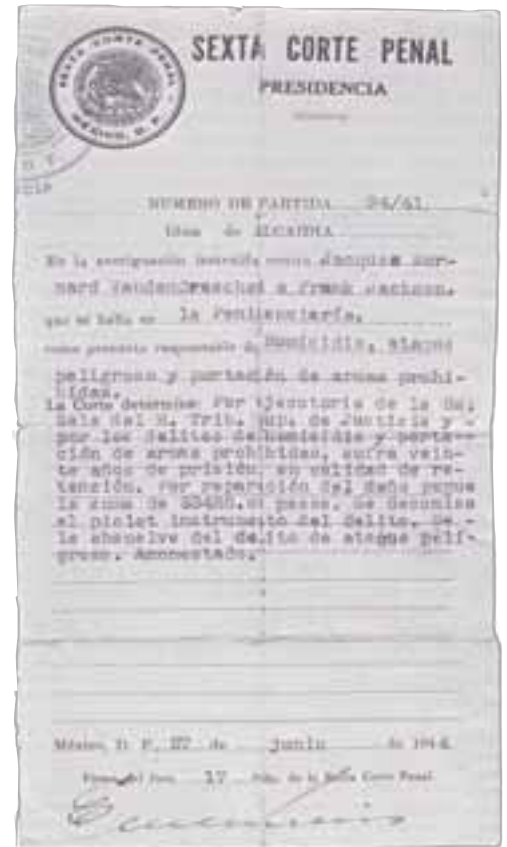
emigrate from their native country’. The Matija Gubec Company suffered particularly heavy casualties in the attacks on Quinto and Belchite. Tony Babich was killed in action on 3 April 1938 somewhere on the Aragón front.

The International Brigades were withdrawn on 21 September 1938 and a death certificate for Babich was issued by the Spanish government on 12 May 1939. As the war ended on 1 April 1939, this certificate must have been issued by the Nationalist authorities.

Finest

It has often been remarked that the volunteers were the ‘finest of their generation’. Tony Babich should be remembered as one of this esteemed group, not as the man who ‘supplied’ Leon Trotsky’s assassin with a passport ‘from the grave’, whose name was almost wiped off the record and whose honour has been marred by the actions of Soviet secret intelligence. He deserves better.

His memory is not lost, however. His name can be found on the national memorial to the Canadian volunteers located in Ottawa. It lists 1,547 persons, Tony Babich’s name appears as ‘Anton Babich KIA’ (killed in action). There are no other details on him and I have so far been unable to locate a photograph of him.



▲ Copy of Ramón Mercader’s sentencing decision, with Frank Jackson given as one of his aliases.

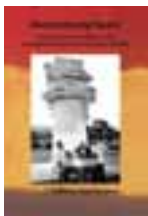
Mackenzie-Papineau Battalion memorial in Ottawa, which was unveiled in October 2001.



ANTI-TANKS: Middlesbrough International Brigader Tommy Chilvers' painting of the Anti-Tank Battery of the 15th International Brigade, held in the IBMT office at the Marx Memorial Library.



Definitive collection of IBMT work



'Remembering Spain: Essays, Memoirs and Poems on the International Brigades and Spanish Civil War' edited by Joshua Newmark (The Clapton Press, 2023).

Skilfully collated and edited by Joshua Newmark, 'Remembering Spain' is a brilliant – perhaps even definitive – account of the published output of the IBMT.

Newmark is a PhD researcher at the University of Leeds and his supervisor, Professor Peter Anderson, facilitated this project and provides the preface. Newmark's introduction gives a strong summation of the contents, highlighting some of the links between the various contributions. The anthology is split into five main sections: The Volunteers, The War, Solidarity,

Aftermath and Reflections – each headed by a rare, well-sourced image.

The Volunteers section is headed by a photo provided by Ruth Muller, showing International Brigader Sam Lesser sitting next to nurse Margaret Powell. But it was the appearance of Sam Wild in the background that took me by surprise. It is an image that I'd not seen before.

Section

Richard Baxell begins the section with his capable outline of the varied national identities of the volunteers who made up the British Battalion. Mike Wild's contribution is next, also focusing on the volunteers and showing their humanity and activism by detailing the 1932 Mass Trespassers of Kinder Scout who went on to fight in Spain.

The eclectic diversity of the volunteers is further explored through various contributions looking at the

Irish, Scots and Welsh combatants and one on the Cypriot volunteers creatively provides a comparative counterpoint. Joshua has brilliantly chosen micro-studies throughout this anthology to enrich the general picture; the unfamiliar in a familiar context.

His skilful use of continuity and linking is highlighted in the second section – The War. Here the contributions relating to individual volunteers are used to accentuate the experience of the British Battalion. Thus it is the section which includes the majority of accounts from

'Joshua has brilliantly chosen microstudies throughout this anthology to enrich the general picture; the unfamiliar in a familiar context.'

volunteers. The unfamiliar accounts from the familiar names, such as Sam Lesser and Bob Cooney, contrast with unfamiliar names recounting familiar aspects of the war in Spain. For example, I have read or listened to numerous first-hand descriptions of the fighting on Hill 481 but Steve Fullarton's harrowing account renews the horror of this battle.

Though it is on a melancholic subject, it was a particular joy to see Bob Beagrie's poem, 'There's Wally', alongside the work of other poets that I much admire. The wide-ranging articles add to the collective picture, each building upon previous contributions whilst offering something unique.

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FROM PREVIOUS PAGE

The section entitled *Solidarity* astutely brings to the forefront aspects and characters who are usually overlooked.

These articles provide a wonderful range whilst maintaining a continuity and lead onto the *Aftermath* section beautifully, for here the enthusiasts make way for academic debate and then back to personal stories, making for a delightful read. A piece from Angela Jackson, historian of women in the civil war, is followed by one by the late Herminio Martínez, who wrote of his experience coming to Britain as a Basque child refugee.

Some of the biggest names are left until last. The *Reflections* section begins with a piece from Michael Higgins, President of Ireland, and is shortly followed by leading historians Helen Graham and Paul Preston, and esteemed filmmaker Ken Loach. This change of pace allows the reader not only to gain knowledge, but also

‘The breadth of subjects and the additional focus on individuals means this is a hard anthology to surpass.’

consider and reflect on what they have read so far.

This anthology is hard to fault. True there were some selections that I was less enthusiastic about, but these will likely appeal to readers with different interests and tastes than my own.

Focus

The breadth of subjects and the additional focus on individuals means this is a hard anthology to surpass. I know I will be returning to this volume many times and with renewed interest, probably even sparking interest in those selections which I might have overlooked on this read through.

In a wider sense, ‘Remembering Spain’ is a celebration of the broad church of intellectual and political interests of the leadership, researchers and supporters of the IBMT. It highlights the passion that the organisation’s members have for the legacy and memory of the International Brigades and the Spanish Civil War.

Joshua Newmark should be applauded for his editing and selection and all those who played a part in the volume’s production – Jim Jump, Professor Anderson, The Clapton Press – should be commended. Anyone with an interest in the British Battalion should ensure they have this anthology and that it is kept close to hand.

TONY FOX

Available for £17 plus £3 p&p from the IBMT Shop:
international-brigades.org/product/remembering-spain.



▲ Volunteers in Spain in 1938. Front row: Sam Lesser sits between two volunteer nurses: his future wife, Margaret Powell (reading the *Daily Worker*) and an unknown American. Back row (from left to right): British volunteers Alan Lawson and Lon Elliott, the nurses Ann Murray (reading *Frente Rojo*) and Ave Bruzzichesi, and the last British Battalion commander in Spain, Sam Wild.

◀ Manchester volunteer Victor Shammah (left, with pipe) of the British Battalion poses with unknown individuals thought to be fellow members of the 15th Brigade.

Clive Branson was also a poet

**'The Selected Poems
of Clive Branson'
edited by Richard Knott
(Smokestack Books, 2023).**



International Brigader Clive Branson is best remembered today as an artist rather than a poet. Five of his paintings are in the Tate Gallery's collections. A self-portrait is on the cover of this first anthology of his poems.

Several of his paintings and drawings were a highlight of the Conscience and Conflict exhibition about Britain's artistic response to the Spanish Civil War at Chichester's Pallant House Gallery in 2015. Among them was a remarkable series of sketches of fellow British Battalion prisoners of war.

'The fact that Branson's poems remained out of print for so long says more about the prevailing aesthetic ethos of the Cold War years than it does about the quality of his verse.'

Branson arrived in Spain on 16 January 1938 and was captured at Calaceite in Aragón two months later. He spent the next six months in prison camps at San Pedro de Cardeña, near Burgos, and Palencia. The latter camp was run by the Italians and conditions were much less harsh than at San Pedro. The authorities even allowed him to sketch, paint and write poetry.

In a prisoner exchange with Italian soldiers he left Spain on 24 October later that year, crossing the frontier on foot at Irún-Hendaye with other members of the battalion. They were jeered along the way by a crowd of Franco supporters giving the fascist salute.

Battersea

Before going to Spain, Branson lived with his wife Noreen in Battersea, then a working-class district of London. Both were from wealthy backgrounds and had been privately



Clive Branson in British Army uniform.



◀ Noreen Branson and Clive were married in June 1931. She was a prominent Communist Party campaigner and writer.

educated. Noreen worked for Communist Party leader Harry Pollitt, while Clive dedicated himself to party activities. He sold the *Daily Worker* at factory gates and at Clapham Junction station, campaigned for Aid Spain and helped International Brigade volunteers passing through the capital.

As Richard Knott recounts in his introduction, Branson had wanted to go to Spain much earlier than he did, only to be told

The International *Clive Branson*

We'd left our training base
And by the time night fell
Stood facing the Universe
Singing *The International*.

I remember it so well
Waiting in the station yard
The darkness stood around still
And the stars, masses, stared.

That's when I first understood
One is never alone in this fight.
I'd thought the 'good-bye' was for good
And left all behind that night.

But everything new that I meet
No matter how strange and uncertain,
Holds something familiar that
Proves the fight is still on.

How often I marched, and marching
I sang of an England unseen,
Watched the great crowds gathering
And the tramp of their feet beat in tune.

Even in the grip of prison
I joined in the singing of millions
As they wait at their wayside station
That leads to the battle lines.

I'm singing in every country
Where I tread through the streets of Time
One man, one woman, humanity
'The International' our theme.

January 1940

by Pollitt that his talents were needed at home.

On his return from Spain, 'his political certainties as strong as ever', as Knott puts it, Branson continued the anti-fascist fight during the Second World War. He joined the British Army's Royal Armoured Corps. Aged 36, he was killed in action in Burma in 1944 during a tank battle with the Japanese.

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For first bringing Branson's poetry to public attention we must thank Valentine Cunningham, the Oxford English professor who edited the 1980 'The Penguin Book of Spanish Civil War Verse'. He included nearly 20 of Branson's poems in a section headed 'Prisoner'. Only two of them had been published before, both of them more than 40 years previously in left-wing journals.

'Prisoner' is also the title of one of the sections in this new compilation, for which we

must now thank Richard Knott and Smokestack Books. They have collected more than 70 of Branson's poems, a large proportion of them about the war in Spain or inspired by his experiences in it.

Print

The fact that Branson's poems remained out of print for so long says more about the prevailing aesthetic ethos of the Cold War years – when politically committed poetry fell out of fashion – than it does about the quality

of his verse. Clive and Noreen had one child, Rosa, who became an artist. She was aged nine when her father died but long remembered the painting lessons he had given her.

In 2011 she donated a large mural-style painting dedicated to the International Brigades to the Marx Memorial Library in London. It hangs in the meeting room on public view, next to the British Battalion banners brought back from Spain.

JIM JUMP

► Mural by Rosa Branson, daughter of Clive and Noreen Branson, marking the 75th anniversary of the creation of the International Brigades.



'The Charmed Life of Sam Wild' by Matthew Durham (2023).

Matthew Durham and I had made contact a few years earlier following a Facebook chat and he told me that he had done a Masters dissertation on my father, Sam Wild, and started on a novel, but found the reality more intriguing.

The research for the book led him to explore the archives in greater depth – 'The Charmed Life of Sam Wild' was the outcome. It came out at the same time as the opening of previously unused archives and library collections and the appearance of several new publications on the International Brigades.

Sam's father was Samuel Horobin Wild, an engineer from a Manchester Gorton family. He also worked as a barman in family pubs near Hyde. It was there he met and married Sam's mother, Mary Ann McGrail. She was born in Castlebar in County Mayo and came to live in Ardwick. Samuel converted to Catholicism and they were married in St Aloysius



The last commander

Church.

Sam was born on 19 August 1908 in Ardwick, the youngest of three children. Their father eventually joined the Manchester Regiment when the First World War broke out. Sam's mother died of heart disease when he was very young and he ended up living together with a variety of Irish relatives. His mother's sister, Aunt Bridget, was strict and brought him up as a churchgoer.

When he was still a youngster he joined the Royal Navy, in 1924, and served on a number of ships around the world, learning weaponry and basic military skills. He was a good sportsman, became politically aware through contact with shipmates and became an avid reader.

Eventually serving the British Empire became intolerable to him. After studying its history, Sam jumped ship in Cape Town. He was eventually

captured in October 1932 and sent back to England, where he was discharged after 42 days in the Navy jail, and, when he was sent back to Manchester in February 1935, he found that his older brother John had

'Both were wounded by enemy fire from the knoll and Sam took four machine-gun bullets that narrowly missed his spine.'

passed away of myocarditis aged 21.

Sam got a job as a boilerman in a cinema. He became involved in the local unemployed workers' movement, joined the Communist Party, and was at the forefront of anti-fascist protests when Oswald Mosley's Blackshirts tried to establish themselves in the area. He befriended his sister's partner and fellow

Heroes from the Scottish isles



'Island Brigaders: Arran, Millport, and the fight against fascism in 1930s Spain' by Liam Turbett (Good Press, 2023).

This is a wee 36-page gem and Liam Turbett (pictured on this issue's front cover) has done us all a great service by researching and writing it.

This narrative takes us far from Scotland's industrial base of Communist Party, Hunger March and anti-Blackshirt activism in Glasgow, Dundee and the coalfields, which provided the majority of that country's volunteers for the International Brigades.

Here, instead, is the story of three individuals whose lives began on separate isolated west coast islands, yet all headed to fight in Spain.

We're learning more about these volunteers thanks to Turbett's investigations, who himself grew up on the Isle of Arran, the largest of the islands in the Firth of Clyde.

George McLeod, from the Isle of Lewis, emigrated to Canada as a 21-year-old and then travelled back over the Atlantic to fight in Spain with the 15th International Brigade's heavy artillery.

Robert Milton was born in the town of Brodick, on the Isle of Arran in June 1917. He later moved to the mainland, to the industrial town of Kilmarnock, working at the Post Office.

He was a member of the Union of Postal Workers and the Young Communist League.



Investigation

A police investigation was triggered when he and a fellow Kilmarnock postie, George Gowans, dropped their delivery bags to head for Spain.

William Bamborough was that rarest of things; a Scottish volunteer who flew with the Republican air force. Born in 1904 in Millport, the avid young aviator signed up to defend the threatened Spanish Republic from the skies soon after the war began. Astonishingly, after completing six months airborne, he returned to Spain as a blockade-running merchant seaman and survived his ship being sunk by Hitler's Condor Legion.

Sometimes, by studying the bigger picture of the Spanish Civil War, we miss the fascinating details.

Here you will find your antidote. Three compelling



portraits, well-researched and enthrallingly written. Follow the thread that takes you from Robert Milton's sister, delivering groceries around Arran on her bike, to an assassination attempt on Franco a quarter of a century later. No, I didn't see that one coming either.

I really don't want to write too much about this book because it's only 36 pages and I don't want to let slip any spoilers. Simply order it online and if you really don't think it was entirely worth it, I'll refund you the money myself.

MIKE ARNOTT

Available for £5 plus 95p p&p from: islandbrigaders.bigcartel.com. Profits will be donated to hardship funds for striking workers and refugee charities.



◀ British Battalion officers prior to the Ebro offensive, July 1938, including Sam Wild (centre).

communist campaigner Bert Maskey (Barnet Masansky). Around this time he and Bert met George Brown, local recruiting officer for the International Brigades and shortly left for Spain in one of the early transports in 1936.

They went out by ferry and by train on weekend passports, ending up at the International Brigade base in Madrigueras. Sam was elected armourer and trained other volunteers on Lewis guns and small arms.

The British Battalion was being built up as part of the 15th International Brigade and there was a sizeable number of volunteers who knew each other from the Manchester area.

Jarama

In early 1937, during the brutal Battle of Jarama, Sam and his comrade David Crook ended up on the Conical Hill and fought around the notorious Suicide Hill. It was

there that both were wounded by enemy fire from the knoll and Sam took four machine-gun bullets that narrowly missed his spine.

He crawled back to a dressing station and later found himself in hospital where he slowly recuperated, finally returning to the line at Jarama in summer 1937, where he took up his job as armourer again. He rejoined the battalion at the Battle of Brunete in July 1937 and was wounded again on Mosquito Ridge, with a wound to the thigh. Several accounts say the bullet went through several men in that incident.

When he recovered following Brunete, Sam fought at Teruel in December 1937 and in the Aragón Offensive in March 1938, when the exhausted Republicans were forced to retreat.

It was during this period, as the British Battalion was regrouping and gaining new recruits, that Sam was promoted to British Battalion commander. He took on leadership just as the volunteers made preparations to recross the Ebro river, towards that decisive, final battle of the British Battalion.

MIKE WILD



◀◀ A teacher and translator from Bournemouth, Humfry Scott served as political commissar in the 20th Anglo-American Battalion. He is pictured here before leaving for Spain in 1936.

◀ John Gates, political commissar of the Anglo-American 2nd company of the 20th Battalion, pictured in May 1938 by the 15th International Brigade Photographic Unit.

Death of a commissar

JOHN GATES reports the death of commissar Humfry Scott (1904-1937) after the Battle of Pozoblanco in this letter dated 30 April 1937 to Humfry's Sudeten Czech wife, Hedwig 'Hedi' Zappe. It was transcribed by IBMT Archivist Alan Lloyd, from the original held in the Scott family archive.

Dear Comrade Hedi,
It is with great sorrow that I write you of the death in action of your husband, Humfry Scott. Not only because it will be a great blow to you but because we lost one of our best and most valuable and dearly beloved comrades.

Comrade Scott was political commissar of the English section of our company, the 2nd Anglo-American Company of the 20th Battalion of the International Brigade.

He had a great understanding of his work and was of tremendous aid to me in the political work.

Our company was known as the most disciplined company in the Battalion, with an extremely high morale.

And now, after one month at the front, we not only retain that reputation, but have added to it a record of discipline, heroism and courage under fire. To this record, the work of Comrade Scott contributed in no small degree.

He was not only a fine political worker, but also was an example in the fighting.

The position we occupied at the front was a very dangerous one – dominated by the enemy from a superior height and under heavy sniping fire at all times. We were daily subjected to heavy artillery and aviation bombardments.

‘He was not only a fine political worker, but also was an example in the fighting.’

In all this Scott occupied one of the first trenches. On the day of the fatal action, under cover of artillery fire, the enemy (Moors) advanced to within 10 metres of our position and surprised us with hand-grenades, forcing us from the

position. In this, Comrade Scott, in his position, was killed by a grenade before he knew what had happened. He died instantly.

The next day we counter-attacked, and took the position back again.

We buried Comrade Scott with military honours on Chamorro mountain, near Pozoblanco, in the province of Córdoba. His grave is marked with a hammer and sickle built of stone. I enclose a letter

‘His grave is marked with a hammer and sickle built of stone.’

which I found among his personal effects. I am sure you will find it dear to you.

In closing, I want to say that although Comrade Scott was not a member of the Communist Party, his work and the example he gave us, proved that he would have filled with honour a place in any Communist Party in the world. He was a True Bolshevik.

The memory of Comrade Scott will always be treasured by us. Long live the International Brigade! Forward to victory over Fascism! For a free and Democratic Spain!

**Comradely yours,
John Gates.**

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.

For orders outside the UK or to pay by credit card or PayPal, go to the merchandise page on our website: (www.international-brigades.org.uk/catalog) where there are also other items listed for sale.



Spanish Civil War postcards: Collection of 20 cards based on designs originally made in 1937 by the Sindicat de Dibuixants Professionals. Produced in collaboration with art reproduction specialists Past Pixels. £12 plus £3 p&p.



Scotland International Brigade tote bag: This tote bag remembers the 549 Scottish volunteers who fought fascism in Spain. Produced by radical merchandise specialists Red Molotov. £11 plus £3 p&p.



Wales International Brigade tote bag: Celebrate the 184 volunteers from Wales who fought fascism in Spain with this tote bag. Produced by radical merchandise specialists Red Molotov. £11 plus £3 p&p.



British Battalion t-shirt: Based on the original British Battalion banner brought back from Spain towards the end of the Spanish Civil War. Design comes in full colour or monochrome. Produced by merchandise specialists Red Molotov. Available in sizes: **XXL, XL, L, M, S** £20 plus £4 p&p.



Ireland International Brigade tote bag: This tote bag combines the Spanish Republic's flag and the starry plough of the Irish Citizen Army. Produced by radical merchandise specialists Red Molotov. £11 plus £3 p&p.



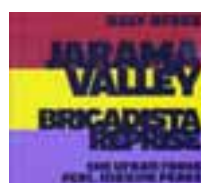
Football scarf: In the colours of the Spanish Republic. With '¡No pasarán!' on one side and 'International Brigade Memorial Trust' on the other. £13 plus £5 p&p.



Felicia Browne t-shirt: A tribute to the women who volunteered to support the cause of anti-fascism in the Spanish Civil War. Based on a sketch of a militawoman by Felicia Browne, a British artist who was herself a militawoman in Spain. Produced by merchandise specialists Red Molotov. Available in sizes: **XXL, XL, L, M, S** £20 plus £4 p&p.



International Brigades greetings cards: Featuring five different pieces of International Brigade-themed artwork. Produced in collaboration with art reproduction specialists Past Pixels. 10 cards and envelopes per pack. £10 plus £3 p&p.



Jarama Valley/Brigadista Reprise CD single: Billy Bragg performs the famous song of the British Battalion, plus Maxine Peake delivers La Pasionaria's emotional farewell speech to the International Brigades with a dub backing from The Urban Roots. £6 plus £3 p&p.



Tote bags: High quality cotton canvas tote bag with designs based on the British Battalion banner, the International Brigade emblem or celebrating Irish, Scottish or Welsh volunteers (see designs of the respective t-shirts). Available in a range of colours. Produced in collaboration with Red Molotov. 38 x 42cms. £11 each plus £3 p&p.



International Brigades mug: 2,500 volunteers from Britain and Ireland joined the legendary International Brigades to fight fascism in the Spanish Civil War. This quality ceramic mug features the emblem they wore with pride. Produced by radical merchandise specialists Red Molotov for the IBMT. £9 plus £3 p&p.



British Battalion mug: This quality ceramic mug features a design based on the original British Battalion banner brought back from Spain towards the end of the Spanish Civil War. Produced by radical merchandise specialists Red Molotov for the IBMT. £9 plus £3 p&p.



INTERNATIONAL BRIGADE MEMORIAL TRUST

Help us inspire new generations with the story of the men and women who fought fascism and defended democracy in Spain from 1936-1939.

International Brigade Memorial Trust

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¡No pasarán!
They shall not pass!

