



# IBMT Newsletter

www.international-brigades.org.uk

Issue 19 / New Year 2008

## INTERNATIONAL BRIGADE MEMORIAL TRUST



This magnificent photo of International Brigaders from the British Isles appeared in *The Sunday Times Magazine* of 21 October. The composite photo of the eleven volunteers – taken individually and put together by Mark Read – accompanied a feature on the International Brigades written by Chris Haslam, along with a brief biographical note on each of the veterans in the photo.

Pictured from left to right are: Terry Maloney, Jack Edwards, Andy Andrews, Steve Fullerton, Jack Jones, Penny Feiwei, Bob Doyle, Sam Lesser (seated), Bernard McKenna, Paddy Cochrane and Lou Kenton.

The feature can still be read online at [[http://entertainment.timesonline.co.uk/tol/arts\\_and\\_entertainment/books/article2688486.ece](http://entertainment.timesonline.co.uk/tol/arts_and_entertainment/books/article2688486.ece)].

One of the veterans pictured above, Andy Andrews, will be celebrating his 101st birthday on 15 February and the Somerset Association of Trade Union Councils is organising a party for him in Taunton. For more information see “Diary dates” on page 4.

Seated beside him in the photo is IBMT Chair Sam Lesser, who was interviewed about the International Brigades by global TV channel Al Jazeera on 30 October. The item can be seen on the internet on [[www.youtube.com/watch?v=1UpjAAhiK8I](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1UpjAAhiK8I)].

Sam also laid a wreath on behalf of the IBMT at the Soviet War Memorial in London on Remembrance Sunday in November.

## New law honours volunteers

By Ana Pérez

On 31 October 2007 the Spanish parliament approved a law that acknowledges and enhances the rights of those who suffered persecution or violence during the Spanish Civil War and the subsequent dictatorship. The new law also provides some redress on their behalf.

The Law of Historic Memory (Ley de la Memoria Histórica) recognises the rights of the victims of the civil war and Francoism. It guarantees resources to help identify and find their mass graves. Francoist legislative measures are scrapped. Francoist tribunals held during the civil war are declared illegal and items such as coats of arms and plaques that commemorate the military uprising or the repression of the dictatorship are to be removed.

As far as the International Brigades are concerned, the text of the section headed “Explanation of causes” (Exposición de motivos) says: “It is therefore time for Spanish democracy, and those generations who are alive to enjoy it, to honour and remember for ever all those who

*directly suffered injustices and wrongs as a result of politics, ideology or religious belief during those painful chapters of our history. [These include] of course, those who lost their lives... also those who lost their liberty... also those who left their homeland and were consigned to a long, bitter and, in many cases, irreversible exile... and, finally, those who at various times fought for democratic values, such as... the International Brigades...*”

In addition, the volunteers who were part of the International Brigades will be allowed, according to Article 18 of the new law, to take up Spanish nationality without having to renounce their current nationality.

For the Association of Friends of the International Brigades (AABI), and for all Spanish democrats, this new law is a cause for satisfaction and provides an opportunity for many people to recover with dignity their historic memory, whether personal or collective.

Ana Pérez is the President of the Madrid-based AABI (Asociación de los Amigos de las Brigadas Internacionales).

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

## International Brigade Memorial Trust

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

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*Annual membership rates are £15 standard and £7.50 for concessions; affiliating organisations by arrangement. Further details and membership forms are available from the Membership Secretary, along with standing order and gift aid forms.*

## IBMT NEWSLETTER

The IBMT Newsletter is published three times a year and is sent free to all members of the IBMT. Members living overseas can access the current issue by using a password on the IBMT website. Back numbers can be downloaded from the IBMT website on [[www.international-brigades.org.uk/newsletter.htm](http://www.international-brigades.org.uk/newsletter.htm)]. For information about receiving the IBMT Newsletter on tape, contact the IBMT Secretary.

Send all items for inclusion in the next issue to the editor by 28 April 2008 at the latest.

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By Marlene Sidaway

### Fundraising

Our outgoing Treasurer, Nick Moreno, noted at the Annual General Meeting in October that our present healthy financial position was largely due to the Pyrenees Easter walk, organised by Pauline Fraser. But in order to continue this financial impetus we should aim to organise at least one major fundraising event each year. There will be two opportunities in 2008:

**Run for the IBMT:** Last September, Chris Hall did a 10km road race which finished at the Sheffield Peace Garden – see picture below. He would be willing to do it again if people sponsored him, with all money going to the Trust (we would be responsible for collecting it). It took him 65 minutes last year – perhaps you could sponsor him to finish or to complete in under an hour. Would anybody else like to do it – the more the merrier – or is there a road race in your area where you could get a group to run for us? See [[www.greatrun.org](http://www.greatrun.org)] for runs in your locality – there is a Manchester run in May, but you need to apply in January. Contact me with any ideas.

**Cycle ride from Glasgow to Barcelona:** Charles Jepson and Sid Sherriff of the Clarion Cycling Club are marking the 70th anniversary of a fundraising ride made by members Ted Ward and Geoff Jackson in 1938 with a ride this year from Glasgow to Barcelona. En route, cyclists visit International Brigade memorials. See listing on page 4.

### Exhibition

The exhibition on the International Brigades and the Spanish Civil War which opened in the Linen Hall Library in Belfast on 12 October is available for touring to other cities in the UK during the next 15 months. Harry Owens would like to hear from libraries, trade unions, universities etc who would like to host it. Contact Harry on 00 35 31-830 2816.

### Bert Carnall

I know many of you will be sad to learn that Bert Carnall died on 5 November. Pauline Fraser and I joined many of his family and friends to pay tribute to Bert, who had always been a keen supporter of the Trust and was a founder member of the Friends of the International Brigades in 1996.

### Media interest

We are hoping for good media coverage of this year's 70th anniversary events. As well as being

the new editor of the *IBMT Newsletter*, Jim Jump has been appointed as our press secretary, so if an International Brigade event is happening in your area, contact him for background information and contacts. It is important that whatever goes out in our name is accurate and as informative as possible.

### Prisoners of war

We should remember during this year's 70th anniversary of the withdrawal of the International Brigades and the return of the British Battalion in December 1938 that not all the volunteers returned home then. As Dolly West pointed out at our Annual General Meeting, we must not forget the prisoners who were left behind.

### Essay competition

The Abraham Lincoln Brigade Archives has announced its 2008 competition for the best essays about the Spanish Civil War or the anti-fascist struggles of the 1920s and 30s. At least two prizes of \$500 each will be awarded, one to the best undergraduate essay, the other to the best graduate entry. Essays must be of at least 5,000 words and must have been produced as part of a degree or graduate course. Submissions from US and international contestants are welcomed. The deadline is 1 June 2008. For more entry details see [[www.alba-valb.org/content/index/classroom\\_contest.php](http://www.alba-valb.org/content/index/classroom_contest.php)].

### Website

We continue to receive many compliments about our website, [[www.international-brigades.org.uk](http://www.international-brigades.org.uk)], and our webmaster, Richard Baxell, has recently updated it again – including the Roll of Honour. Check it out.

### Merchandise

Don't forget to look at our website for the commemorative china, t-shirts and books, which are all sold to raise money for us – and are excellent value.

### Thanks

My thanks once again to all the veterans who give their time and share their memories so generously and to the members of the committee – we couldn't have a more dedicated bunch of people. With their hard work and the inspiration of the Brigaders, I know we will go from strength to strength. Good wishes to you all for 2008.



A triumphant but exhausted Chris Hall beside the International Brigade memorial in Sheffield following his run last year. See "Fundraising" above.

By Jack Jones

This will be a momentous year for the IBMT. It will be the last full year of the 70-year anniversary of the Spanish Civil War and that noble attempt by ordinary working people from across the world to make a stand against the forces of fascism.

Most especially it will be the 70th anniversary of the great Battle of the Ebro. I took part in that struggle, along with many other good comrades from these shores. Many of them sadly never left that battlefield. I was privileged last November to attend the re-dedication of the plaque on Hill 705 commemorating the 90 British Battalion volunteers who died fighting at the Ebro. It warmed my heart to hear how committed the local mayor and council are to keeping this extraordinary site safe from further desecration.

I recommend to all who can to visit this enduring memorial and gain a clear vision of the arduous terrain over which the Ebro offensive was fought.

Through 2008 there will be a series of special events here, in Spain and other countries and I urge everyone to be as supportive as possible to ensure the ongoing memory and meaning of the conflict is never lost to posterity. As is very apparent, even now we can never be too vigilant in helping prevent the rise of authoritarian politics.

At the start of another year, I must thank all those good friends who through their selfless efforts have made the IBMT such a great success with an ever-rising membership. We have cause to celebrate and commemorate.

Happy new year to you all. Feliz año nuevo. ¡Salud y suerte!



On one of his trips to Spain last year, Jack Jones went to Logroño, capital of the La Rioja region, where he visited the memorial to the many hundreds of local Spanish Republican sympathisers who were murdered by the fascists at the outbreak of the civil war. He is pictured (centre) at the monument at Lardero, near Logroño, with leaders of the regional CCOO trade union federation Jesús Cámara (left) and Carlos Ollero.

## Lecturing on civil war myths

Ángel Viñas (pictured right) will deliver the IBMT's annual Len Crome Memorial Lecture at the Imperial War Museum, London, on 8 March. Entitled "Old Wine in New Bottles: resilience and resurgence of old myths about the Spanish Civil War", the lecture will examine some of the myths nurtured by conservative, Trotskyite, pro-anarchist, anti-Negrinist and neo-Francoist historians until the present day.

A professor of political economy at Madrid's Complutense University, Viñas is one of Spain's leading historians of the Spanish Civil War. Last year saw publication of his "La Soledad de la República", the second volume of a three-part history of the Spanish Republic at war.



This year's lecture will be preceded by a showing of the film "The Guernica Children" and readings from the re-published "Behind the Spanish Barricades", John Langdon Davies's classic reportage from the Spanish Civil War.

Viñas has also had a distinguished career as a diplomat, having served as the European Community's ambassador to the United Nations from 1992 to 1996, as well as holding diplomatic posts for the Spanish government in Washington, Bonn and Brussels.

See "Diary dates" (page 4) for more details.

## ¡Viva la República! in London

A fiesta to celebrate, commemorate and mourn the Spanish Republic of 1931-39 is to be held at the Yaa Asantewaa arts centre near Paddington, west London, on the evening of Saturday 26 April.

¡Viva la República! will feature, poetry, prose, music and dance and aims to bring together those individuals, families and communities whose lives have been influenced or inspired by the Republic and its resistance to fascism.

April 14 is the Day of the Republic in Spain and

is celebrated in many towns and villages.

The event is being organised by Jim Jump of the IBMT and Manuel Moreno of the Basque Children of '37 Association UK. Both organisations are supporting the fund-raising and educational initiative which, if successful, will become an annual event. Admission is free, though places can be reserved in advance to guarantee entry. There will be a Spanish menu and a bar.

See "Diary dates" (page 4) for more details.

## OBITUARIES

### Kurt Goldstein

By Pauline Fraser

Kurt Julius Goldstein died in Germany on 26 September at the age of 93. He was expelled from school in 1932 because of his activities as a member of the Communist Party (KPD). As soon as they had taken power in 1933, the Nazis came to arrest him, but he escaped. In October 1936 he was one of the first 300 volunteers to join the International Brigades. Wounded at Segura de los Baños, he took part in the Battle of the Ebro.

After the fall of the Republic, Kurt Julius was held in internment camps in France for three years, notably Drancy, where the Germans arrested him and he was transported to Auschwitz. There he led the resistance and organised sabotage. He was one of 3,000 prisoners forced to make the "death march" to Buchenwald. Only 500 survived. On 11 April, he took part in the self-liberation of Buchenwald.

Returning to Germany he initially worked for the KPD in Dortmund, but moved to the GDR in 1951, where he held leading positions, including head of a radio station. In 1976 he became vice-president of the Auschwitz Survivors' Group and

took part in the 60th anniversary commemorative events.

He was an active member of KFSR (Friends of Republican Spain). In 2002 he was unanimously elected honorary president of the newly united West and East German organisations of victims of fascism. In 2005 he was awarded Germany's highest civil award for his work for the victims of Nazi persecution.

He defined himself as "a German, a Jew and a communist in that order". The words of La Pasionaria: "It is better to die on your feet than live on your knees!" became his life maxim.

### Juan Moreno

Juan Moreno, who died on 1 December, aged 63, was an active and enthusiastic IBMT member.

Born into a prominent London family of Spanish Republican exiles, he was politically active throughout his life, first in the Young Communist League and later in the Labour Party. He was a founder member of the Basque Children of '37 Association UK and helped keep alive the memory of the Republican community in Britain through his website: [www.spanishrefugees-basquechildren.org].



Victor Erice's "The Spirit of the Beehive", set in Spain soon after the end of the civil war, is one of a dozen films to be screened at the "Spain (Un)censored" season at London's BFI Southbank in January. See listing below.

● **14 December 2007 – 2 March 2008:**

Exhibition "Frente al Fascismo: Nueva York y la Guerra Civil Española" / "Facing Fascism: New Yorkers and the Spanish Civil War" at the Instituto Cervantes, C/Liberos 23, Alcalá de Henares; more details at [[http://cvc.cervantes.es/actcult/ciudades/alcala\\_henares/](http://cvc.cervantes.es/actcult/ciudades/alcala_henares/)].

● **15 January-17 February 2008:** "Spain (Un)censored", a season of subversive films made during the Franco dictatorship at the BFI Southbank in London; 19 January will be a "study day", with IBMT Patron Professor Paul Preston one of the participants; full details: [[www.bfi.org.uk/whatson/bfi\\_southbank/film\\_programme/january\\_seasons/spain\\_un\\_censored](http://www.bfi.org.uk/whatson/bfi_southbank/film_programme/january_seasons/spain_un_censored)].

● **9/10 February 2008:** "The Spanish Civil War: History, Memory, Representation", Temple of Peace, Cathays Park, Cardiff CF10 3AP; conference organised by the Welsh Centre for International Affairs; speakers include Julián Casanova, Helen Graham, Angela Jackson and Paul Preston; more information on [[www.scwconference08.com](http://www.scwconference08.com)].

● **15 February 2008:** 101st birthday party for Brigadier Andy Andrews at the Albemarle Centre, Albemarle Road (off Station Road), Taunton TA1 1BA; 7-11pm; speakers, food, music and bar; organised by the Somerset Association of Trade Union Councils; more details from Dave Chapple: 01278-450 562.

● **15/16 February 2008:** Anniversary tour of the Jarama battlefield, starting Saturday at 9.30am, followed by a commemoration at the memorial at Morata de Tajuña; at 7.30pm on Friday there will be the launch of two books by Brigaders James R Jump and Theo Francos at CAUM, Plaza de Tirso de Molina 8-1º, Madrid 28012; more details from Alan Warren: tel: 01495-775 561 or [[warren.ofbooks@virgin.net](mailto:warren.ofbooks@virgin.net)].

● **8 March 2008:** IBMT's Len Crome Memorial Lecture; Imperial War Museum, Lambeth Road, London SE1 6HZ; by Professor Ángel Viñas; the lecture begins at 2pm and will be followed by a question and answer session chaired by Professor Paul Preston. At 11am there will be a screening of the re-edited version of the Steve Bowles film, "The Guernica Children", followed by readings from "Behind the Spanish Barricades" and a talk about its author, John Langdon Davies, *News Chronicle*

correspondent during the Spanish Civil War.

● **9 March 2008:** "Memories of a Future", Renoir Cinema, Brunswick Square, London WC1N 1AW; 10.30am for 11am; première of Margaret Dickinson's new film about the International Brigades; shown with "The Battle of Cable Street" and followed by a discussion; part of the London Socialist Film Coop's 2007/8 season of films; more information on [[www.socialistfilm.blogspot.com](http://www.socialistfilm.blogspot.com)].

● **26 April 2008:** "¡Viva la República!", Yaa Asantewaa Centre, 1 Chippenham Mews, London W9 2AN; from 6.30pm – 11.30pm; poetry, dance, film, music etc to remember and celebrate the Spanish Republic; Spanish menu and bar; supported by the IBMT and the Basque Children of '37 Association UK; free admission, but register in advance to guarantee entry at [[vivalarepublca@hotmail.com](mailto:vivalarepublca@hotmail.com)].

● **14 June 2008:** Talk by Professor Michael Alpert, "The Blockade of Bilbao", 2.30pm, Marx Memorial Library, 37a Clerkenwell Green, London EC1R 0DU; organised by the Basque Children of '37 Association UK; contact association secretary Natalia Benjamin [[n.benjamin@ntlworld.com](mailto:n.benjamin@ntlworld.com)] to register.

● **21 June 2008:** "Sussex and the Spanish Civil War"; Lewes; organised by the local trades council as part of the town's cultural week, it will use verse, prose and song to tell the story of Sussex's involvement in the International Brigades and the Aid Spain movement; contact Mike Anderson for more information: [[mike.c.anderson@talktalk.net](mailto:mike.c.anderson@talktalk.net)].

● **4/5 July 2008:** Anniversary walk over the Brunete battlefield, plus poetry and music; meet at CAUM, Plaza de Tirso de Molina 8-1º, Madrid 28012 on Friday evening for a reception and on the Saturday walk the route of the offensive finishing on Mosquito Hill; more information from Alan Warren (see above) or Seve Montero [[seve.montero@gmail.com](mailto:seve.montero@gmail.com)].

● **19 July 2008:** Annual commemoration at the International Brigade Memorial, Jubilee Gardens, London SE1; 12.30 for 1pm, followed by get-together with optional lunch at the adjacent Premier Inn (formerly Travel Inn), Belvedere Road, London SE1 7PB.

● **24-27 July 2008:** Events marking the 70th anniversary of the start of the Battle of the Ebro, including a conference at Mora d'Ebre and a commemoration in the Sierra de Pandols; more details from Alan Warren (see above).

● **29 July- 18 August 2008:** Clarion Cycling Club's Glasgow to Barcelona bike ride, commemorating 1938 fundraising trip; first leg to Portsmouth (arriving 8 August), then ferry to Bilbao for second leg from Saragossa to Barcelona; proceeds to IBMT; more details from Charles Jepson [[clarion@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:clarion@yahoo.co.uk)] or Alan Warren (see above).

● **23 September 2008:** Inauguration of monument near Gandesa commemorating the last action of British Battalion at the Battle of the Ebro; more details to follow.

● **10-12 October 2008:** IBMT's Annual General Meeting in Dundee; more details to follow.

## New Ebro memorial is unveiled

By Pauline Fraser

On 10 November, the strains of "Scotland the Brave", played by a trio of Catalan bagpipers, greeted a crowd of Spanish and British supporters of the International Brigades as they made their way in sunshine to the top of Hill 705 above Gandesa. They had gathered to witness the unveiling of a new plaque commemorating the 90 British Battalion volunteers killed at the Battle of the Ebro.

The original plaque, unveiled by the late Alun Menai Williams in May 2005, was removed by Falangists (Spanish fascists) in August last year and the site desecrated. As news of the outrage spread, Angela Jackson and Rachel Ritchie, who are local residents, contacted press and politicians to get things going. Offers of financial assistance poured in. In the end it was agreed that Comebe, the society for the preservation of the memory of the Battle of the Ebro, would foot the bill to erect a new plaque.

Speaking before the unveiling, Pere Marti, the mayor of Pinell de Brai, welcoming the assembled guests, referred to his responsibility, in conjunction with the Generalitat (government of Catalonia), to preserve the site at Hill 705.

IBMT Patron, Professor Paul Preston, said he was "deeply moved, as always, to be here where so many men fought and died for liberty, while governments turned a blind eye, putting class prejudice before principle". He said that the vandalism had brought out many positives in the reaction of the Generalitat, the mayor of Pinell and the solidarity that exists between the people of Catalonia and the International Brigades.

Performing the unveiling, Jack Jones, IBMT Life President, said the International Brigades had not just been fighting the forces of Franco, but of Hitler and Mussolini as well. "Democracy was, and is, our cause."

Lluís Salvadó, President of Comebe, invited everyone to return to the Ebro in 2008, when a series of events to mark the 70th anniversary of the battle would take place between July and November.

On the following morning, the British joined many locals in the nearby village of Torre de Fontaubella for the unveiling of a second plaque, this time commemorating the Republicans – soldiers and civilians – killed by Franco's forces and whose bodies were thrown into a mass grave. The organisers, No Jubilem la Memòria, invited Jack Jones, once again, to unveil their plaque.

## IB hospital remembered

By Alan Warren

Benissa hosted its second homage to the Spanish Republic and the International Brigades from

31 October to 16 November 2007. The main event was the unveiling of an impressive memorial outside Casa Feliu on the main Calpe-Benisa road where the town's International Brigade hospital was based.

The plaque was unveiled by the mayor, Juan Bautista Rosello Tent, and a speech was also given by Marco Puppini of AICVAS, the Italian International Brigade association. The ceremony was attended by Spaniards, Italians, British and Germans.

The inscription on the base of the memorial reads in Catalan: "The people of Benissa in homage to the solidarity of the International Brigades and in honour of their medical work among us".

Robert Llopis Sendra must be congratulated for his untiring work in remembering the International Brigade hospital at Benissa. It is hoped that a similar event will take place in 2008. For further information please contact Robert on [tombaturons@gmail.com].

## Why so many Jews went to Spain

Research suggests that at least 5,000 and perhaps as many as 8,000 of the 35,000 men and women from around the world who travelled to Spain to join the International Brigades were Jewish, historian Richard Baxell told a meeting in London on 21 November organised by Spiro Ark, the Jewish cultural organisation.

Some 200 or more of the 2,400 volunteers from the British Isles were Jewish – "a remarkable proportion", he said, given that – according to the 1931 census, Jews comprised only two-thirds of one per cent of the overall British population.

He stressed, however, that precise figures for the numbers of Jewish volunteers were difficult to establish. As the Commander of the British Battalion, Bill Alexander, had noted: "Little attention was paid to religious or cultural background, and no one thought of keeping any record of Jewish volunteers."

The reasons why Jews joined the International Brigades in such large numbers were not difficult to fathom, said Baxell. Fighting fascism in Spain would help the fight against anti-semitism in Germany and elsewhere. A victory for Franco was seen, by extension, as a victory for Hitler.

For the majority of Jewish Brigaders from Britain, volunteering to fight in Spain was a natural progression from their prior involvement in the anti-fascist movement against Sir Oswald Mosley's blackshirts.

As with the volunteers in the British Battalion, the majority of Jews fought within the national units, on which the International Brigades were chiefly formed. However, there was one significant exception: a small number fought with a specifically formed Jewish unit, known as the Botwin Company, as part of the XIII International Brigade, numbering about 200 volunteers.

Some critics, Baxell acknowledged, had pointed out that official histories of the Brigades did not dwell specifically on the role of Jews. But this was not necessarily because they wished to



downplay their role, he stressed. It was rather because the overwhelming majority shared the Communist Party line that ethnicity was irrelevant.

He added: "Significantly, interviews with, and memoirs of, Brigaders themselves demonstrate that this was not just Party rhetoric, but a belief held strongly by many of the volunteers, Jewish or not, during, and after, their time in Spain."

## IB memorial vandalised

By Guillermo Casañ

A plaque in honour of the International Brigades in the Benicàssim cemetery has been smashed by vandals. It was found on 21 October.

The municipal government (PSOE, IU, BLOC) has ordered the police to open an investigation. According to Ramón García, board member of the Associació Republicana González Cherna (the organisation that promoted the placing of the plaque in 2004), the replacement might now be a monument instead of a plaque, with the names of the Brigaders who died in this coastal town.

Although the plaque's destruction received little press coverage – only the leftist *Levante* carried a full report – the memorial stirred controversy a few years ago. The ARB-PP municipal government ordered it to be removed and the mayor placed a single plaque in honour of all the Spanish Civil War dead. However, thanks to pressure applied by progressive groups and the press, the IB plaque was restored.

This town, once the site of an IB hospital, rendered a tribute to the internationals in 1996 and unveiled a plaque in their honour at one of the villas, now a cultural centre, used by the hospital.

## A bus for Reggie Saxton?

Reggie Saxton spent the early years of his medical career in the International Brigades, serving in the front line during the Spanish Civil War. He later practised medicine in Brighton for many years. With the full approval of Reggie's family, IBMT Treasurer Mike Anderson has asked the Brighton and Hove Bus Company to name a bus in his honour – as they do for distinguished people connected with the city. "It will not only be a tribute to Reggie but to all the volunteers who fought against fascism in Spain," he says.

Jack Jones (left) unveils the new plaque at the Ebro memorial in the company of Angela Jackson and Paul Preston. See "New Ebro memorial is unveiled".



Inspired by the story International Brigader Benny Goldman, who died in 2003, his family (above) went to Israel in October and dedicated an ambulance in his name. It was, they said, a hugely emotional moment for them. Goldman joined the International Brigades at the age of 21 in January 1937, believing that fascism had to be defeated at all costs. In the following month he was sent with the British Battalion to the Jarama front, where he received a serious head wound. At the clearing station it was decided that he was too injured to be returned to the field hospital. However, when an ambulance arrived, Benny jumped in and received treatment. He returned to the front and was wounded again but survived, unlike many of his comrades.



Mary Greening, daughter of Brigader Edwin Greening, pictured at the Big Pit National Mining Museum of Wales in Torfaen during its exhibition in November to commemorate the 70th anniversary of the Spanish Civil War. The exhibition focused on Mary's father, who was a South Wales miner.

# KV5/46-58 files and the surveillance of the IBA

**MI5 and Special Branch kept a close eye on the International Brigade Association (the IB veterans' organisation that was a forerunner of the IBMT), according to Security Service files now released to the public.**

By Daniel Ahern

I was researching for a local history group at the National Archives in Kew but had finished early so I decided to glance through the lists of MI5 Security Service (KV) files. Here I came across KV5, released in September 2006, which contains folders concerning the International Brigade Association from 1941 to 1954. Unfortunately the 1940 folder was destroyed.

I looked at three of these files (1942, 1953 and 1954). Most of the papers are reports of public meetings (with cuttings), purloined letters or telegrams and lists of members and petitioners. There are extracts from Communist Party meetings relevant to Spain at the party's King Street HQ; clearly, there was a bug in the room.

In January 1942 there is a report on the last of six public meetings at Holborn Hall on military strategy – Hans Kahle spoke on Red Army tactics. Seventy people were present. Telephone taps on CP HQ relevant to Spain are listed under the telephone numbers Temple Bar 2151 and 4277. (The practical work of surveillance was done by Special Branch.)

Later in 1942 there is correspondence from two Austrian and German escapees from the Gurs camp in Vichy France who have reached Portugal, requesting help from London. They sent a long, detailed report on the awful conditions in the camp.

There are attempts to stop the circulation of the IBA's *Volunteer for Liberty* at the Church of Scotland NAAFI centres. A list of all the London IBA members follows. A report in September is from somebody working at the IBA offices. He describes a Czech volunteer: "She speaks English with no trace of an accent but she is unmistakably foreign – sallow with the cobwebby dark hair, droop-cornered eyes and ruffled eyebrows of the foreigner." Finally, our spy writes: "If there is anything odd going on, why don't they take more care who they let in?"

1953 and 1954 were years of campaigns to release Republicans imprisoned under Franco. The Special Branch reports on an IBA/Aid to Spanish Youth Committee meeting on 16 October 1953 (90-100 present).

At a public meeting on 30 January 1953, 250 people heard Leah Manning suggest US forces in the UK should be contacted so they can in turn contact Spanish workers and express their solidarity. (It's not clear how.)

The 1952 IBA annual general meeting is included in the 1953 file. The point is made that members often meet at The Orange Tree in Tottenham Court Road.

A report on Alec Donaldson, a leading member of the IBA, and his wife, suggests that he is importing blocks from the USA and printing American comics, an apparently profitable venture (if true). Donaldson is reported as a generous donor to the IBA.

On 19 March 1954 it is recommended that all IBA executive committee members should have personal files; this was not necessary for ordinary members unless they were also Communists. A security bureaucrat notes: "This year's accounts as presented to the AGM have yet to reach us. I have asked for them." ("Source was extremely well placed to obtain the above information.")

There had to be a check on demonstrators but not petition-signers. However, there is a list of petitioners from Birkbeck College and another one of signatories to a petition to the Spanish embassy. There is a description of a poster parade outside the Spanish embassy on 24 March 1953.

There is also a list of organisations, usually trade union branches, at a conference on "Spain and Political Prisoners" held at the Holborn Hall on 28 February 1954; all this from "a very reliable source"!

And here is the security analysis of the 1953 campaigns to release democrats who were being tried in Barcelona, having been arrested in 1949: "The interpretation by Basques in this country is that the CP is attempting to cash in on the situation, identifying itself with protests etc emanating from non-Communist quarters, attempting to save certain Spanish Communists also under arrest and manoeuvring for a new National Front alliance in which Communists will play the dominant role."

All this paper, of course, is only a billionth of the still secret security archives, all the paper and footwork paid for with public money – and most of it decades old.

**The following note about the IBA, headed "File ref KV 5/46-58" appears on MI5's website at [www.securityservice.gov.uk/output/Page285.html]: "The thirteen reconstructed files of Security Service information... focus on the propaganda and campaigning work of the IBA on behalf of Brigade veterans and against the Franco regime. Through intercepted correspondence of leading figures such as Nan Green (to April 1947 when the warrant was suspended) and phone calls, and through reports of meetings around the country, a detailed history of the development of the IBA can be reconstructed. The records of liaison with the Secret Intelligence Service show that in the post-war years most of the correspondence passed through Kim Philby's hands."**



● John Carass wants to know where he can find an original print of this photo that appeared in "In Defence of Liberty", the brochure published to accompany the inauguration of the International Brigade memorial in Jubilee Gardens, London, in 1985. He thinks the man on the left of the group of medics departing for Spain is his father, **Harry Carass**. Can anyone confirm the identities of those pictured? Contact John on [j.carass@ntlworld.com].

● Miguel Ángel Herrera of FilmNova Production would like to make contact with any surviving volunteers in the **North-East** who would be happy to talk to him about their time in Spain. He would record any interviews and create a podcast downloadable from a non-profit website he is establishing. Contact Miguel on 0191-226 3253 or via [www.filmnova.com].

● There is to be a monument to Brigadier George Brown erected in Inistioge, Co Kilkenny, next year and Martin Gahan is seeking information on three **Kilkenny** men – Michael Brown, Sean Dowling and Michael Brennan – who fought with the XV Brigade alongside George (killed at Brunete in July 1937). Martin would be grateful for any information, please contact him on [martingahan@eircom.net].

● Peter Glanfield, who lives in Cyprus, has kindly donated a book of reproduction illustrations, "**The Doorway**", given to his mother at the beginning of the Second World War by a friend who was an International Brigade veteran. The book was published by the Propaganda Offices of the CNT-FAI. Most of the illustrations are in good condition, drawn in 1936 and signed by "Sim". The front page of the book is signed in pencil by seven volunteers, among them Frank Williams (Newport); Arthur Nicoll (Dundee); Dan Davies (Rhondda); Edwin Greening (Aberdare); Bob Cooney (Aberdeen); Alan Gilchrist (Manchester). Does anyone know anything more about this book?

*If you do not have an email to reply to queries, contact IBMT Secretary Marlene Sidaway (details on page 2) and she will pass your message on. Much of the additional information listed comes from the British IB archive, via the IBMT's researcher, James Carmody, whose work is much appreciated.*



## For Spanish and the Republic

**“Poems of War and Peace/Poemas de guerra y de paz”, by James R Jump, with a foreword by Antonio Buero Vallejo, edited by Jim Jump, €18\* (Editorial Piedra de Rayo, Logroño, 2007)**

Reviewed by Manuel Moreno

James R Jump joined the International Brigades after he met and fell in love with Cayetana Lozano Díaz, one of the 105 “señoritas” who arrived in Britain on the *Habana* with 4,000 refugee children from the Basque region of northern Spain in May 1937. Their paths crossed

at the children’s colony in Worthing, where Jump, a reporter on the *Worthing Herald*, was a volunteer helper.

He went to Spain in November 1937 and was injured while fighting with the machine-gun company of the British Battalion at the Battle of the Ebro. He married Cayetana soon after he returned to Britain in December 1938.

Jump was one of those volunteers in the Spanish Civil War who fitted into the dubious stereotype of it being a “poets’ war”. He wrote his first poems in Spain, two of which are included in this posthumous collection. The rest were written in the 1970s and 80s, many of them when he and Cayetana moved to live in Logroño, La Rioja, after Franco’s death.

Marriage to Cayetana helped make Jump a brilliant Spanish linguist, as is evident from the fact that the poems in this moving anthology were written by him in English and Spanish. He also wrote several books on Spain and the Spanish language, among them the “Penguin Spanish Dictionary”.

As well as nearly 50 poems, the anthology contains a foreword written by the great Spanish dramatist Antonio Buero Vallejo, penned shortly before Jump’s death in 1990, after which plans for the book’s publication were shelved.

The book is edited by Jim Jump, who has written a fascinating account of his father’s life and

involvement in the Spanish Civil War and Spain in general. It is accompanied by several pages of photographs – dating from the civil war up to the 1980s when Jump senior was the secretary of the International Brigade Memorial Appeal, the committee that raised the national memorial to the International Brigades in London’s Jubilee Gardens.

Both the foreword and the biography are in English and Spanish too – you simply turn the book upside down to consult the other language version. Its publication in Spain will hopefully help to keep alive the story of the foreign volunteers who fought on the side of the Republic.

As the title of the book suggests, many of the poems are about the civil war and others rejoice in the vibrancy of post-Franco Spain’s transition to democracy. The understated emotional force of some of the poems will, I am sure, move many readers to tears. They are a powerful testament to the lasting impact that the war had not just on one individual but a whole generation of Republican sympathisers in Britain.

\*Copies can be ordered for £12 including p&p (proceeds to the IBMT) from Jim Jump on [jimjump@mac.com] or tel: 020-7228 6504.

Manuel Moreno is the Chair of the Basque Children of ’37 Association UK.

## TESTIMONY

# You fool, you fool, why did you have to shoot me?

By Steve Fullerton

The place: Hill 481, near Gandesa; 1 August 1938. The battle was over and our attempt to take the summit of Hill 481 by frontal attack had failed. Small arms fire from both sides had stopped and only the artillery from afar kept firing, though at a much lesser frequency.

I looked around and everyone without fail was on the ground either wounded or killed. I seemed to be the only one left unscathed. I started to give the help I could to those behind me and worked my way along and upwards, until I came to Paddy (O’Sullivan). A broken left arm and a broken right leg was his own diagnosis. For something to say I simply said: “I was trying to help the comrades down there.” He said: “I know, I was watching you”. Probably he was not the only one watching me. It’s possible that the enemy was watching me too.

I thought back to that day when we recruits caught up with the British Battalion at Reus. I heard Paddy’s voice giving orders to his men and I thought: “He’s too strict for me. I hope I don’t get posted to his section.”

But I was, and I asked around about Paddy and with almost one voice they told me: “He’s a good man to be up the line with.” Dusty, Peter,

Den, all of them were of the same opinion, so that was good enough for me. I soon settled down and accepted my lot and had no trouble at all.

Michael (O’Riordan) used to come from his side of “Chabola Valley” to our side to chat with Paddy, and they both stood so erect. Paddy always looked the soldier and was always dressed as though ready for parade. He and Michael stood more or less face to face when they chatted, but not exactly. It was more left shoulder facing left shoulder or right shoulder facing right shoulder. I never could understand this stance and many years later I asked Michael about it. He laughed and said it was the IRA training: you can look forward and watch your back at the same time. I never did find out if he was joking.

Paddy told me to put a tourniquet on his left arm and another on his right leg, which I did, and checked that with his right hand he could release both if and when he thought it necessary. “Find a safe place until it’s dark, then come and get me,” he said. Find a safe place! He told me to have a good look around so I could identify the area properly. It was quite easy because a nearby tree had been cut in two and the upper part had fallen, pointing to Paddy. I started to

make my way down to a depression I had seen from my higher level and was just getting into it when I heard a short burst of machine gun fire – and I felt the thud. I had been hit and I fell into the hole. “You fool, you fool, why did you have to shoot me?” I thought. The battle was over and only the artillery was active.

I lay there for several hours waiting for dark, and when it did get dark, I heard Jimmy calling from our line and coming out towards me. He was calling for Paddy and I called him over to me and told him exactly where to find Paddy. I watched his back as he disappeared in the dark.

I now had to consider my own position. How would I get back? Well, I made it, dragging my machine gun with me which was taken from me when I got back, and I was taken to the first aid post.

It was not until some weeks later when I was convalescing that I learned that Paddy had not been rescued and was now listed as killed at Hill 481.

You fool, you fool, you bloody fool, why did you have to shoot me?

Transcribed by Marlene Sidaway from a tape sent to her by Steve Fullerton. Steve is our youngest Brigader – not yet 90!

# Belfast hosts AGM and unveils memorial

By Pauline Fraser

Three Brigaders attended the 2007 Annual General Meeting of the IBMT in Belfast on 13 October: Bob Doyle, the last surviving Irish International Brigader, IBMT President Jack Jones and Jack Edwards. A highlight of the weekend was the attendance of Amaya Ruiz, daughter of Dolores Ibárruri (La Pasionaria) and her daughter, Lola Sergueyeva.

The weekend of events began the previous evening at the Linen Hall Library with the opening of an exhibition of photos, memorabilia and other material relating to the Spanish Civil War.

On the morning of the AGM, a memorial dedicated to the International Brigaders and to those who supported the Spanish Republic from both communities in Belfast was unveiled by Bob Doyle in Writers' Square. A large crowd, which included IBMT members from every part of the British Isles, joined the local International Brigades Commemoration Committee (IBCC) and their supporters from the Belfast labour movement for the event.

Doyle brought the anti-fascist struggle up to date with a scathing and comprehensive condemnation of the crimes of imperialism. "Let us remember that the same US corporations that supplied the fascists with oil in Spain are today pilfering the oil of the Iraqi people," he said. "The British Government that lied to the people about non-intervention while secretly giving financial credits and hypocritically allowing arms to be smuggled to the Spanish fascists is the same Government that today lied about weapons of mass destruction and took the British people into a war that they did not want."

Amaya Ruiz said that being present at the unveiling was "one of the happiest days of my life". She was very moved by the events and paid tribute to the brave men of the International Brigades. She spoke of her mother's struggle, as the daughter and wife of a miner, to bring up her family in poverty. "People still remember her and



Amaya Ruiz (bottom left) joins Brigaders Jack Jones (second from left), Bob Doyle (seated) and Jack Edwards (third from right) beside the newly unveiled memorial in Writers' Square, Belfast. Among those also pictured are Lynda Walker (left), Lola Sergueyeva (right) and Kevin Doherty (second from right).

say: 'What a shame that we don't have another Dolores.'"

Kevin Doherty of the IBCC spoke of the importance of the memorial, not only as a commemoration of a piece of Belfast's working class history, but for its role in bringing together both traditions in the community. Other speakers at the unveiling included Margaret Ritchie, Northern Ireland Minister for Social Development. The unveiling was followed by a civic reception in Grosvenor Hall hosted by Belfast's Lord Mayor, Jim Rodgers.

At the AGM, which was attended by 55 members and eight observers, the outgoing Treasurer, Nick Moreno, told members that the Trust had healthy balances of £20,990. Mike Anderson, a

retired Unison official, was agreed as the new Treasurer. The existing committee was reelected. It was agreed to co-opt Richard Thorpe.

Secretary Marlene Sidaway thanked Lynda Walker, Ciaran Crosse, Kevin Doherty and all the members of the IBCC who had done such a brilliant job in organising the AGM weekend.

In the evening, members and guests made their way to the Europa Hotel for music and entertainment, including a harp recital by Brenda McGaley, daughter of Brigader Michael O'Riordan, and songs from Tommy Sands.

On Sunday there was lunch at The John Hewitt pub, where Jack Edwards spoke of his meetings with La Pasionaria.



Visitors to Belfast had a chance to see the new International Brigade mural on the "Peace Wall" on the Falls Road, once the dividing line between the city's warring communities and now one of its main tourist attractions following the success of the peace process.

## New arrangements for collecting annual subs

By Pauline Fraser

IBMT membership has grown to 750 with more than 70 new members joining in 2007, including a growing number of trade union affiliations.

The Belfast Annual General Meeting approved a change in the way subscriptions for those who pay by cheque or postal order are collected. This

will now take place once a year in the summer, irrespective of the time of year when you used to pay in the past. When you receive your spring *IBMT Newsletter*, you will find a request for payment in the Membership Secretary's column. This should make it easier for members, who won't have to struggle to remember when their subs are due.

There will be no further individual reminder slips. A reminder to pay if you forgot to do so after the summer mailing will appear in the Autumn and New Year newsletters. Those who pay by standing order won't need to do anything, as

subscriptions going into our bank throughout the year gives us a steady stream of income.

Please contact me (see details on page 2) if you would like a gift aid form, standing order form or an affiliation form for a trade union organisation.

### T-shirts

We still have a few Pyrenees commemorative walk T-shirts left in women's fit 36 and unisex 38. We are selling them cut price at £5 plus £2 p&p. If you would like one or more, please send me a cheque made payable to the IBMT, stating size and quantity (address on page 2).