



IBMT Newsletter

www.international-brigades.org.uk

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INTERNATIONAL BRIGADE MEMORIAL TRUST

A national memorial in Madrid

A plaque honouring the English-speaking volunteers of the XV International Brigade was unveiled in Fuencarral Cemetery, Madrid, on 7 May by the British ambassador and representatives of the IBMT and its US sister organisation, ALBA.

Until now no national memorial has stood in Spain to the British Brigaders, although there is a memorial to those who died in the Battle of the Ebro.

The new plaque joins memorials in the same cemetery to French, Italian, Jewish and Yugoslav International Brigaders and to the Soviet aviators who died in the Spanish Civil War.

For the IBMT, Jim Jump thanked the ambassador, Denise Holt, for her participation in the ceremony and for her speech acknowledging the role



British ambassador Denise Holt unveils the plaque at Fuencarral Cemetery, Madrid.

of the 2,300 volunteers from the British Isles in the fight against fascism. However, he made it clear that the Brigaders, as well as the Spanish Republic, were betrayed at the time by the British government's appeasement of German Nazism and Italian fascism and by its policy of "non-intervention" in the civil war.

"The British Brigaders came to Spain because they wanted to fight fascism and because they were ashamed of their own government's abandonment of a fellow democracy," he said in an address to visitors at the unveiling.

The plaque would now serve as a tombstone

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Death of Jack Jones: Battle of the Ebro veteran and IBMT Life President

Tributes to a legend

By Jim Jump



Jack Jones (left) in Barcelona last year with fellow British Battalion veteran Bob Doyle, who has also died this year. They were in the city for a reunion of surviving International Brigaders from around the world to commemorate the 70th anniversary of their departure from Spain.

The IBMT has lost its founding President and a man whose life was an inspiration to the international labour movement.

Jack Jones died peacefully on 21 April in a nursing home in London where he had been admitted only two weeks earlier, shortly after celebrating his 96th birthday on 29 March.

Jones fought at the Battle of the Ebro in 1938, where he was badly wounded. He later rose through the Transport & General Workers' Union (TGWU) to become its General Secretary at the height of the union's power and influence.

His funeral at Honor Oak Crematorium, south London, was attended by hundreds of family, friends and well-wishers from around the world. The IBMT was represented by Chair Sam Lesser and by three of the speakers – Secretary Marlene Sidaway and Trustees Rodney Bickerstaffe and

Manus O'Riordan. Among other speakers were Tony Benn and Tony Woodley, Joint General Secretary of Unite, the TGWU's successor union.

As this Newsletter goes to press, plans were being laid by Unite for a major celebration of the life of Jack Jones in central London this summer.

His death followed that of Bob Doyle at the age of 92 in January, whose funeral in north London Jones and fellow veteran Lesser both attended.

Their deaths leave just eight known International Brigaders from the British Isles still alive.

Among the tributes to Jones read out at his funeral was a personal message from Prime Minister Gordon Brown. Referring to the IBMT President's time in Spain and to his role as a champion of union members and pensioners, Brown said: "Jack was always shoulder to shoulder with those in need of support or solidarity."

See Tributes to Jack Jones: page 3; Obituaries: pages 6-7.

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

Charity no: 1094928

Patrons: Ken Livingstone and Paul Preston

Chair: Sam Lesser

Secretary: Marlene Sidaway
37 Reginald Road, London E7 9HS
020-8555 6674
marlenesidaway@hotmail.com

Treasurer: Mike Anderson
16 Meadow Way, Heathfield,
East Sussex TN21 8AL
01435-864 978
treasurer@international-brigades.org.uk

Membership Secretary: Mary Greening
2 Woodford Close, Radyr Way,
Cardiff CF5 2PH
029-2055 2315
memsec@international-brigades.org.uk

Other committee members: Mike Arnott, Richard Baxell, Rodney Bickerstaffe, Jack Edwards, Pauline Fraser, Mick Jones, Jim Jump, Dolores Long/Hilary Jones (jobshare), Duncan Longstaff, Manus O'Riordan, Richard Thorpe

Annual membership rates are £15 standard; £7.50 for concessions; £20 family (single household); affiliating organisations by arrangement. Further details and membership forms are available from the Membership Secretary.

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]. For information about receiving the IBMT Newsletter on tape, contact the IBMT Secretary.

Send all items for the next issue to the editor by 14 August 2009 at the latest.

Editor: Jim Jump
6 Stonells Road, London SW11 6HQ
020-7228 6504
editor@international-brigades.org.uk

The IBMT's sister organisation in Australia, the AAFIB, holds an annual commemoration each December at the memorial in Canberra's Lennox Gardens to the 70 Australians who joined the International Brigades. Pictured right is AAFIB President Sarah Burns. See "Australia remembers" below.



By Marlene Sidaway

Sad start to the year

This year has already been a very sad one for us. On 21 April we lost our loved and respected President, Jack Jones, and on 22 January Bob Doyle died. It's hard to think of our organisation without them; whenever there was a commemoration, memorial meeting or unveiling, whether in Britain, Ireland or Spain, they were there – raising their fists in salute, remembering their comrades of 70 years ago, exhorting us, the younger generations, to keep up the fight for justice, equality and peace.

Bob's funeral was at Golders Green, north London, and the following weekend his ashes were paraded down O'Connell Street in his native Dublin. Our thanks go to all who made donations to the IBMT in memory of Bob, which totalled £275.

Jack's funeral was appropriately on May Day. It was hard for those of us who spoke at it not to show our deep sorrow at the passing of a man who had been such an inspiration for so many years. Salud comrade: you kept right on 'til the end of your road!

4 July: Jubilee Gardens

This year's Jubilee Gardens annual ceremony on Saturday 4 July (starting at 1pm) will be extended to incorporate a tribute to Jack Jones. The Spanish ambassador, Carles Casajuana i Palet, and broadcaster Robert Elms are among the speakers who hope to attend and we will welcome guests from Spain, Germany and Sweden. After the usual lunch in the Premier Inn, there is a chance to have a special viewing of the "Guernica" tapestry at the Whitechapel Gallery from 5pm (see pages 7 and 12). Wine and snacks will be available, and later we can book an Indian restaurant in nearby Brick Lane. Let me know if you would like to go to the gallery and the meal afterwards: [marlenesidaway@hotmail.com] or tel: 020-8555 6674.

Our Annual General Meeting

More details about our Annual General Meeting in Durham on 9-11 October will be available in the next Newsletter. The plan is to assemble early Friday afternoon in Middlesbrough where we hope to hold a ceremony at the memorial plaque in the town hall. Transport will then be arranged from there to Durham, where there will be a social and/or a film showing on the Friday night.

On the Saturday there will be an unveiling of a memorial plaque at the Miners' Offices, Red Hill, Durham DH1 4BB, followed by the AGM itself and a social in the evening. On the Sunday we will travel to Newcastle upon Tyne to the memorial tree in the Civic Centre Garden.

All these arrangements are to be confirmed. Any members in the North East whom I have not contacted already, please get in touch if you can help in any way with the organisation. The North East supplied many volunteers for Spain and a lot of help and support was sent from there to the Spanish people. We owe it to all of them to make this weekend a special commemoration and hopefully make new contacts and friends in the area.

Spanish nationality

The long-awaited conferring of dual nationality on the Brigaders will take place when their Spanish passports are handed to them at a ceremony at the Spanish embassy in London in June. The publicity resulting from the Spanish government's announcement put us in touch with two other Brigade veterans, Thomas Watters, who was with the second Scottish Ambulance Unit, and Joseph Kahn, who fought at Jarama.

Setting out our stall

We plan to have a stall at the Durham Miners' Gala on 11 July and also at the Tolpuddle Festival on the following weekend on 18/19 July. Don't forget to drop by and say hello if you are attending either event.

Australia remembers

Thanks to Kate and Des Speight (see also page 10), we are now in touch with Australian comrades who commemorate the Australian volunteers with an annual picnic at the International Brigade memorial in Canberra. For more information, contact: Sarah Burns, AAFIB President, 14 Bisdee Street, Hughes, ACT, Australia 2605.

Going strong

Our Chairman, Sam Lesser, continues to spread the word via radio, TV and in the press – his mind still as sharp as a tack and his memories undimmed. At 95, Jack Edwards, with his daughter Margaret, spent May Day in Cuba. Penny Feiwei celebrated her 100th birthday in April and Lou Kenton is 101 this year. Paddy Cochrane and Les Gibson are still going strong too. Our thanks and best wishes go to all of them.

By Prime Minister Gordon Brown

Jack Jones was a fighter for justice all his life. I knew him from my early days as an MP and he persuaded me to write a regular column for pensioners in the *T&G Record*. When I say he persuaded me to write it, I mean he made one of those Jack “asks” where it was clear that “no” wasn’t an option...

That’s what made him so effective – because he knew that saying no to Jack didn’t mean just offending a friend, but saying no to the people he was fighting for. He never wanted any credit or profile for himself – only the chance to serve those in need.

From his time in the Spanish Civil War to his magnificent achievements as a trade union leader to his work on behalf of pensioners, Jack was always shoulder to shoulder with those in need of support or solidarity.

All of us who were personal friends of Jack will miss his advice, his courage and his inspiration. He was a true giant of the labour movement.

By former Labour leader Michael Foot

Jack Jones made his famous trip to Spain at a great moment in world history. We can give Jack our thanks for his service in that great interna-

tional cause and his dedication to many others as well. All the best the Labour government did for our country were a response to his advice and any good Labour government should be carrying out Jack’s proposals for pensioners.

By Juan Carlos Poyán, Secretary of the Asociación de Amigos de las Brigadas Internacionales

Spain never, even in the darkest moments of the Francoist dictatorship, forgot the spirit of the International Brigades. We always remembered the deeds of those men and women like Jack Jones who came to our country to help us in the cruel war that fascism had imposed on our people.

Back in Britain, Jack did not give up his commitment. He continued to assist the exiled, the political prisoners and the underground trade union movement in Spain.

We, as Spaniards, would like to cherish the idea that his fight in our country somehow contributed to make Jack what he was all his life. And we would like to think that his presence among us helped him in his service to mankind and defence of the working class.

Jack has departed us and we mourn his loss, but we will forever have him in our heart. ¡Salud! ¡La lucha continúa!

NEWS



Above: The *Stanbrook* prepares to leave Spain with Republican refugees. Right: Manus O’Riordan pays tribute in Alicante to Capt Dickson (pictured in the portrait behind him); seated left is Ian Gibson, biographer of poets Federico García Lorca and Antonio Machado.



Homage to the Welsh captain who rescued 3,000 Republicans

By Manus O’Riordan

A headline in Spanish daily *El País* on 30 March this year said “Alicante remembers the Welshman who saved 3,000 Republicans” above a report of an emotion-charged three-day programme of events to mark the 70th anniversary of the final days of the Spanish Republic.

As the war ended, 20,000 Republicans found themselves trapped in the port of Alicante, except for the 3,000 who were rescued on 28 March 1939, and brought to Algeria by Welshman Archibald Dickson, captain of the *Stanbrook*.

Tragically, Capt Dickson himself would lose his life, as would all of his crew, when the *Stan-*

brook was torpedoed by a German U-boat in November 1939.

We visited the sites of both the Campo de los Almendros in Alicante, where the trapped Republicans had been first corralled by Italian fascist troops, and the concentration camp of Albaterra, where the vengeful Spanish fascists would squeeze 6,800 prisoners into an area originally designed to hold 1,000. Many hundreds were shot or died from heat exposure and malnutrition.

At the nearby Orihuela home of the poet Miguel Hernández, who would himself die in 1942 in prison, among the poems read was his tribute to an International Brigader.

We also visited various locations in the Elda

region where the Republican government spent its final days, as well as the location of the aerodrome from where that government would finally depart from Spain.

Present was Ángela and Adela Giral, whose father escaped from Alicante on a ship sailing just prior to the *Stanbrook*. They had travelled to the commemoration from New York and Mexico City respectively. Their grandfather, José Giral, had been the Republic’s Prime Minister from July-September 1936 and later Minister for Foreign Affairs under Juan Negrín and Prime Minister of the Spanish Republican government in exile after the Second World War.

The final day saw 1,000 citizens of Alicante gather on the very pier from which the *Stanbrook* had sailed 70 years previously. Special tribute was paid to the memory of Dickson in the presence of his two children, Dorothea and Arnold.

For some of the survivors and their children, this was a commemoration which, at times, was filled with unbearably raw emotion, culminating in a mass floral tribute to the sea, in remembrance of the dead.

On behalf of the IBMT I paid tribute to Capt Dickson and the Republican dead by reciting “Si mi voz muriera en tierra” (“If My Voice Should Die On Land”), a poem by Rafael Alberti.

Is this your last Newsletter?

All membership subscriptions were due in January 2009. If you have not paid your subscription for 2009, please do so by 30 June at the latest. Anyone who has not paid by that date will be deemed to have lapsed their membership and this will be their last Newsletter. If you have any queries, contact Membership Secretary Mary Greening; tel: 029-2055 2315; email: [memsec@international-brigades.org.uk].

Romero targets the revisionists

By Pauline Fraser

The IBMT's annual Len Crome Memorial Lecture on 14 March at the Imperial War Museum, London, which was given this year by Francisco Romero Salvadó from the University of Bristol, was complemented by a morning of events commemorating Bob Doyle.

Romero's lecture demolished a number of myths that "revisionist" historians have attempted to propagate about the Spanish Civil War. In doing so, he made it clear that the British policy of non-intervention doomed the Republic. It was the "perfect instrument of British diplomacy... a combination of chicanery and window-dressing". Hiding behind it, the British government urged the Italians not to bomb Spanish cities as it could be detrimental to British business interests. They even invited the Italians to patrol the Mediterranean, while the French Popular Front government proved to be "a frightened and paralysed friend" of the Spanish Republic.

The revisionists' attempt to explain the Republic's implosion as a result of infighting was "greatly misleading", he commented. It was foreign intervention on Franco's side that determined the course of the war. Without it, the insurgents might have been put down or a settlement arrived at that didn't result in the crushing of one side.

Harry Owens, who edited Doyle's autobiography "Brigadista", spoke about how the Dublin-



DOYLE HONOURED: A portrait of Dublin-born Brigader Bob Doyle, who died in January this year (see obituary on page 6), now hangs in an Irish pub in Vitoria, capital of Spain's Basque Country. The memorial is the work of the Basque association that commemorates the Spanish Civil War and Franco dictatorship, Ahaztuak 1936-77. It was unveiled in April at Paddy Shorts Taberna during a night of Basque, Galician and Irish folk music. Doyle's funeral took place in London on 10 February and a 600-strong memorial march was held in Dublin four days later. Footage of it can be seen at [www.youtube.com/watch?v=AhpKS3lzz9U]. There are photos of the event at [www.geocities.com/irelandscw/ibvol-BD-Feb.htm].

EDINBURGH: A ceremony was held at the International Brigade memorial in Edinburgh's East Princes Street Gardens on 2 April, marking the 70th anniversary of the end of the Spanish Civil War. Among the speakers was the Spanish consul in Edinburgh, Federico Palomero Quez, and historian Daniel Gray, author of "Homage to Caledonia: Scotland and the Spanish Civil War".



born Brigader had "made the great break from nationalism to internationalism" in Spain.

The last word went to Doyle himself, with the screening of his award-winning 1993 BBC "Rebel Without a Pause" TV documentary.

Rededication in Fife

To commemorate the 70th anniversary of the end of the Spanish Civil War, the Fife Federation of Trade Union Councils (FFTUC) rededicated and updated the International Brigade memorial stone by Kirkcaldy station on 4 April. Daniel Gray, author of "Homage to Caledonia: Scotland and the Spanish Civil War", later gave a talk about the volunteers from Fife and Scotland as a whole.

In 2006 – the 70th anniversary of the start of the war – a rededication ceremony was also organised at which, writes FFTUC Secretary James Philp: "We were lucky to have in attendance one of the surviving comrades. We also pledged that, after scrolling through the archives and finding more veterans, to add their names to the memorial."

Email [fifedistrict@rmt.org.uk] for more information.

Conferences in Beijing

By Michael Crook

In this 70th anniversary year of the end of the Spanish Civil War, a cycle of conferences is being held in Beijing's Cervantes Institute.

The first of these, a bilingual event in Spanish and Chinese, was held on 20 January and focused on the role of the Chinese volunteers in the war. The hall was packed with Chinese of all ages and a sprinkling of foreigners of various nationalities.

To launch the evening, Professor Laureano Ramírez, who had proposed this whole series of events, gave a broad overview of the project to study the civil war and its relationship with China.

Then I gave a brief presentation entitled "Defend Madrid! Build New China!", an account of the dozen or so veterans of the war – including my father David Crook – who were drawn to serve

the New China which emerged as the Peoples' Republic of China. Others included International Brigaders Douglas Springhall, Nan Green, Patience Darton and Eric Edney.

The audience heard Professor Zhang Kai's account of the deeds of veterans of the war who came out to China to help the Chinese people in their war of resistance against Japanese aggression (1937-1945).

Hwei-Ru Ni presented a well-illustrated record of the heroism of the Chinese volunteers in Spain: a tantalising taste of the content of her book ("The Call of Spain: The Chinese Volunteers in the Spanish Civil War" by Hwei-Ru Ni and Len Y Tsou), which is expected soon to be translated into Spanish.

If any reader has leads or can tell us more about veterans who served in China, please contact me. The China Society for People's Friendship Studies would be most grateful!

Michael Crook can be contacted at [crookmo6@gmail.com].

Crook's presentation (Microsoft PowerPoint) can be downloaded at [www.gungho.org.cn/cspfs/at/20090204E.ppt].

Tour of Jarama battlefield

By Donald Watson

The annual Battle of Jarama memorial walk and meeting was held on 21 February in bright sunshine. Organised and led by Seve Montero of the AABI (Spanish Friends of the International Brigades), it began and concluded at the International Brigade memorial on the hill overlooking Morata de Tajuña. The walk toured the positions of the British and US battalions, including "Suicide Hill". This year around 250 people from Spain, Britain, Ireland, Germany and the US took part, including some Spanish Republican veterans.

The meeting heard several tributes to Brigader Bob Doyle, a stalwart of International Brigade memorial gatherings who was at Jarama in 2008 but sadly died just before this year's event. His last message included the timely reminder that "where there is recession there will be reaction":



BACK TO SCHOOL: IBMT Chair Sam Lesser (seated centre, above) was greeted by enthusiastic pupils from the Spanish government's Instituto Vicente Cañada Blanch in London after he spoke to them in March about the International Brigades. A few weeks earlier he joined novelist Victoria Hislop (pictured left), author of "The Return", at the same school for the launch of a booklet about the nearby "Echoes of Spain" mosaic on Portobello Road (details on page 10).

the struggle against injustice that brought people like him to Spain goes on.

The previous day, IBMT members were given a guided walk around the Brunete battlefield sites by local historian and AABI member Ernesto Viñas. Complete with maps, photos and debate, the walk included the International Brigade positions on Mosquito Ridge and Villanueva de la Cañada.

See more photos of the event at [<http://atrefu.wordpress.com/2009/02/21/se-ha-celebrado-la-marcha-memorial-jarama-2009>].

Dublin events

Dublin-based IBMT Trustee Manus O'Riordan gave a talk in March at the National Museum of Ireland, Collins Barracks, Dublin, on the memorial banner to the Irish International Brigaders.

The banner, he explained, was produced during the Spanish war itself and unveiled in 1938 by Father Michael O'Flanagan, the only Irish priest prepared to support the Spanish Republic. It was painted by a group of art students led by Maurice Cogan and under the supervision of Aida Kelly.

The banner has been at the National Museum of Ireland since 2006, having previously been on display in the Irish Labour History Museum in Dublin.

O'Riordan also attended the unveiling of a new granite headstone in Dublin's Mount Jerome Cemetery on 20 March for "Jim Prendergast 1914-1974, Republican, Brigadista, Communist".

Prendergast shares the Gannon family grave with Bill Gannon (1902-1965), Dublin organiser of International Brigade volunteers from December 1936, and his sister Mai Hayde. The speakers



In Dublin: Prendergast's grave and the banner to the Irish International Brigaders.

were Gannon's nephews, Tony Hayde and Jack Gannon, Brendan Byrne (nephew of Brigadier Eugene Downing) and O'Riordan, who read out some of Prendergast's contemporary reports from Spain, including his account of the death of Kit Conway in the February 1937 Battle of Jarama, where he himself was wounded.

Fundraising in Perth

By Paul Philippou

Perth Museum and Art Gallery echoed with the sounds of the US Dust Bowl era of the 1930s on 5 March when Professor Will Kaufman of the University of Central Lancashire performed his one-man show on the life of folk singer Woody Guthrie.

Entitled "Hard Times and Hard Travellin", the event was a fundraiser for the Perthshire International Brigade Memorial Fund (PIBMF) and raised £750 towards the cost of establishing a permanent memorial to the volunteers from Perthshire who fought in the Spanish Civil War. The target is £2,000 which, it is hoped, can be reached within a year.

Kaufman, who is currently working on a book on Guthrie, gave the capacity audience of almost 100 people a thrilling evening, telling the story of Guthrie's life in the context of the Depression and the struggles of the US labour movement.

The PIBMF can be contacted at [passionariabooks@blueyonder.co.uk].

TV documentary on Scots

Scottish TV is producing a two-hour documentary on the Scottish International Brigade volunteers.

Prompted by Daniel Gray's acclaimed new history of the Scots in the Spanish Civil War, "Homage to Caledonia: Scotland and the Spanish Civil War", the programme will feature previously unscreened interviews with six Scottish Brigaders that Don Coutts, the producer, did back in the 1990s. These are with Tom Clarke, John Dunlop, George Gowans, John Londragan, Hugh McKay and Jimmy Maley.

Brigader relatives are also being interviewed and filming will also take place in Spain at the Jarama and Ebro battlefields.

The STV documentary is unlikely to be finished before the summer, but will be screened later this year. Watch this space.

Protest to Poles

The IBMT has joined the protests to the Polish authorities over plans to demolish a statue to a leading International Brigader in the city of Poznan.

IBMT Secretary Marlene Sidaway has written to the local council, which has decided that it no longer wants a memorial to Karol Swierczewski, known as General Walter during the Spanish Civil



Poznan's memorial to General Walter (inset).

War. A protest has also been sent to the Polish embassy in London.

Right-wing parties on the city council reportedly resent any memorial which places communists in a heroic light.

Swierczewski was born in 1897 in Warsaw but moved to Moscow during the First World

War. In 1918 he joined the Bolsheviks and fought in the Red Army

As General Walter, he commanded the XIV International Brigade and later the 35th International Division. It is widely believed that Swierczewski/Walter was the inspiration for the figure of General Golz in Ernest Hemingway's "For Whom the Bell Tolls".

The campaign in Poland is led by the Citizens' Movement for the Defence of Monuments and Traditions of the Left and is supported by, among others, the Spanish socialist MEP and Vice President of the European Parliament, Miguel Ángel Martínez, who was jailed under Franco.

Polish embassy in London: [polishembassy@polishembassy.org.uk]; Polish embassy in Dublin: [ambassador@dublin.polemb.net].

Bob Doyle

By Jim Jump

Born into poverty in Dublin in 1916, Bob Doyle, who died on 22 January at the age of 92, was to become a life-long rebel and champion of radical causes. He briefly joined the IRA before serving in the British Battalion of the International Brigades. During the Second World War he was a merchant seaman and settled in London where he later became a Fleet Street print worker and union militant.

In the early 1930s he shared a flat with Kit Conway, a young IRA fighter who had made a name for himself in Tipperary during clashes with the Black and Tans. Under Conway's wing, Doyle joined the street battles against Ireland's Blueshirt fascists and was recruited into the IRA. However, in the split between its traditionalists and a more politically radical wing, Doyle soon followed Conway into the Communist Party and the newly created Republican Congress, whose activists would form the nucleus of the Irish contingent in the International Brigades.

Doyle moved to England and, after a spell working in a Lyons Corner House in London and an unsuccessful attempt to enter Spain as a stowaway, he took a job on a McAndrews Line freighter sailing between Liverpool and Spanish ports. Liaising with the Spanish Aid Committee, he smuggled leaflets into fascist-held Spain until his activities were discovered and he was sacked.

In October 1937 he went to Communist Party headquarters in London and requested to join the International Brigades. With his knowledge of Spain and Spanish, he was put in charge of a group who made their way through France. Once across the Pyrenees, the young writer Laurie Lee was attached to the group. He had entered Spain alone early in December and was to be briefly enlisted in the International Brigades until being medically discharged because of epilepsy in February 1938.

Following training at the British Battalion's base camp at Tarazona de la Mancha, Doyle travelled north to the front in Aragón. Facing overwhelming enemy firepower in fighting around Belchite, he and the rest of the machine-gun company were forced to abandon their positions.

Remnants of the British Battalion joined the Republican retreat eastward in March 1938. At Calaceite, Doyle and some 140 other volunteers were captured by Mussolini's Black Arrow division. The next 11 months he spent as a prisoner of war, for most of the time at a camp at San Pedro de Cardeña, near Burgos, where he survived beatings and was interviewed by Gestapo agents and, more bizarrely, by Spanish psychiatrists attempting to establish the traits of a degenerate "Red" personality.

Release came in February 1939 as part of an exchange for Italian POWs. He resumed work as a merchant seaman and settled in west London, after marrying Dolores (Lola) López, who had arrived from Spain in 1932.

For 18 years after the war he worked for maga-



Bob Doyle in Spain in 2003.

zine publisher Amalgamated Press. As father of the chapel and a member of the union's central London committee, he was one of the leaders of a successful six-week national strike in 1959 for a 40-hour week.

In October 1993 he starred in the BBC2 Video Diaries documentary "Rebel Without a Pause" which showed him travelling to Spain to campaign for a memorial at the unmarked mass grave containing the International Brigade dead of the Battle of Jarama of February 1937. Among them were his friend Kit Conway and the Irish poet Charles Donnelly whose niece, Cluna Donnelly, made the film.

In 2002 Doyle's Spanish language autobiography, "Memorias de un rebelde sin pausa", was launched amid much publicity in Madrid. An English-language edition, "Brigadista: An Irishman's Fight Against Fascism", was published in Dublin in 2006.

Jack Jones

By Jim Jump

Jack Jones, who died on 21 April, aged 96, was the Life President of the IBMT, as well as being one of the outstanding figures in the British and international labour movement.

Following his service in the British Battalion of the International Brigades, he rose through the ranks of the Transport & General Workers' Union (TGWU) to become its General Secretary from 1969-78. He later headed the National Pensioners' Convention until 2001. In the final



Jack Jones (standing centre) before the Battle of the Ebro.

decade of his life he was especially active in commemorating the role of the International Brigades at events in Britain, Spain and Ireland and was a key driving force behind the decision to create the IBMT in 2000.

Born in Liverpool in 1913, Jones left school at 14 to take up an engineering apprenticeship, but swiftly changed jobs to become, like his father, a docker. "Jack" had been named James Larkin in honour of the Irish socialist and union leader of that name and he joined the TGWU in 1927, soon becoming a shop steward. By 1930 he was a member of the union's docks branch committee. In 1934 he helped organise a Merseyside contingent for one of the hunger marches on London.

In May 1938, when he enlisted with the International Brigades, he was already a Liverpool city councillor for the Labour Party. In Spain, he was assigned to the No.1 "Major Attlee" Company of the British Battalion and was appointed its Political Commissar. During the Battle of the Ebro, which began in July 1938, he was badly wounded in the shoulder in fierce fighting near Gandesa. He was repatriated in September following discharge from hospital.

He fought in Spain because, he said: "It was my belief that this was a great challenge to trade unionism, to the Labour Party and democracy. So many friends were killed out there that I thought I could not stand aside."

In his autobiography "Union Man", first published in 1986*, he wrote: "Many harrowing stories could be told of those days. So many good men died, believing to the end in the cause of democracy. Win or lose, the world needs sincerity."

ty. In Spain it was demonstrated by so many in full measure – even unto death.”

On his return to England, Jones married Evelyn Taylor, herself an active and committed socialist and the widow of International Brigader George Brown (the Communist Party's full-time organiser in Manchester), who had been killed in the Battle of Brunete in July 1937. The marriage lasted 60 years until Evelyn's death.

Back in Liverpool, Jones set about helping Republican seafarers who were stranded in Britain and could not return to fascist Spain. His commitment to the cause of the Spanish people remained strong throughout his union career and he joined many campaigns to free trade union and political prisoners in Franco's jails.

During the Second World War, Jones became the full-time TGWU officer in the Coventry district, where, with his belief in “shop-floor power”, he organised the facto-

“Win or lose, the world needs sincerity. In Spain it was demonstrated by so many in full measure – even unto death.”

ries involved in the war effort and boosted productivity.

However, he was effectively blacklisted by the union's hierarchy for being too close to the Communist Party and he remained in Coventry until the union moved politically to the left. Jones transferred to London in 1963 to become a national officer and, six years later, its General Secretary.

He emerged as the most prominent trade unionist in the country and the main architect of the “Social Contract” between unions and the Labour government of the 1970s and of new bodies such as the conciliation service Acas and the Health and Safety Executive.

In 1976, soon after Franco's death but before the restoration of full democratic and trade union rights, Jones returned to Spain and addressed mass union meetings in Bilbao and Barcelona. He also visited the Ebro battlefield and recalled in his memoir how, in Gandesa, Spanish Republican veterans wept as they joined him in toasting the memory of those who had died fighting for democracy.

Jim Callaghan, Prime Minister from 1976-79, offered him a peerage. He declined – typically of a man of enduring socialist principles.

* A revised edition was published in 2003 and can be ordered from the IBMT for £13 including p&p: [www.international-brigades.org.uk/merchandise.htm].



Max Arthur (left), author of “The Real Band of Brothers”, in a photo taken last year with some of the Brigaders he interviewed for his book; from right: Sam Lesser (standing), Jack Edwards, Jack Jones and Bob Doyle. Arthur will be at London's Imperial War Museum on Sunday 31 May for a screening of the documentary that was made in conjunction with the book, “The Brits Who Fought For Spain”. See details below.

● **31 May 2009:** Special screening of the TV documentary “The Brits Who Fought For Spain” at 2pm at the Imperial War Museum, Lambeth Road, London SE1 6HZ; admission free; Max Arthur will introduce the film and sign copies of his book “The Real Band of Brothers”; more details from the IBMT Secretary (see page 2 for contact information).

● **1-30 June 2009:** “Cinema and the Spanish Civil War” season at the National Film Theatre, Belvedere Road, London SE1 8XT; 23 films from 1936 to 2008 and from Spain, UK, East Germany, France, US and USSR to be shown, including several dealing with the International Brigades; more details from [www.bfi.org.uk]; tel: 020-7633 3232.

● **6-7 June 2009:** At Newhaven Fort, Sussex, the La Columna Spanish Civil War reenactment group pay tribute to Jack Jones, who last December unveiled the memorial bench overlooking the port where the British Battalion returned home in December 1938; see [www.lacolumna.org.uk] for more details.

● **10 June 2009:** Talk by historian Daniel Gray on Scottish volunteers in the Spanish Civil War; 7pm, Community Room, Leith Library, Ferry Road, Edinburgh EH6 4AE; event is part of the Leith Festival (5-14 June).

● **26 June 2009:** Lecture to be given by Professor Paul Preston during a weekend of events commemorating the Irish-born Brigader George Brown at Inistioge (Kilkenny, Ireland); on 27 June, the Cuban ambassador will give a talk; details from [martingahan@eircom.net] or [www.geocities.com/IrelandSCW/top-newMaterial.htm] or email Ciaran Crossey: [irelandscw@yahoo.co.uk].

● **4 July 2009:** Annual commemoration at the International Brigade memorial, Jubilee Gardens, London SE1; assemble at 12.30pm; followed by lunch at the adjacent Travel Inn and a visit to the Whitechapel Gallery; see page 2 for more information.

● **12 July 2009:** Benefit gig for the IBMT by The Foundlings (music inspired by The Clash) at 8pm, Inn on the Green, 3-5 Thorpe Close, London W10 5XL; more information from [www.iotg.co.uk].

● **13-16 July 2009:** “Agonía Republicana: Living the Death of an Era”: conference in Dublin organised by Trinity College and the Instituto Cervantes; more information from [www.tcd.

ie/Hispanic_Studies/AgoniaConference].

● **30 August 2009:** Readings of a Spanish Civil War musical “Goodbye Barcelona” by Karl Lewkowicz and Judith Johnson at the Arcola Theatre, 27 Arcola Street, London E8 2DJ at 2.30pm and 7.30pm; £10 entry; more details from [www.arcolatheatre.com]; see also [www.arcolatheatre.com/?action=pasttemplate&pid=296] concerning last year's reading.

● **11-13 September 2009:** Commemoration in Berlin of the International Brigades organised by KFSR, the IBMT's sister association in Germany; for more information email Harald Wittstock at [hwittstock@aol.com] or write to him at: Seelenbindestr 74, 12555 Berlin.

● **27 September 2009:** Provisional date for the unveiling of a memorial near Gandesa to mark the site of the final action involving the British Battalion on 23 September 1938; organised by local historical association Comebe and Corbera town council; contact Alan Warren for more details; tel: +34-933-376 319 or +34-638-438 766; email: [hill705@gmail.com].

● **3 October 2009:** Lecture by Tom Buchanan, organised by the Basque Children of '37 Association UK and titled “The Basque Refugee Children in Britain 1937-1939: Personal Memory and Public History”; 2.30pm at Kensington & Chelsea Library, Philimore Walk, London W8 7RY; details: [secretary@basque-children.org.uk].

● **9-11 October 2009:** IBMT Annual General Meeting in Durham (AGM on 10 October) plus associated events in Middlesbrough and Newcastle; see page 2 for more information.

● **Until 18 April 2010:** “The Nature of the Beast” by Goshka Macuga at the Whitechapel Gallery, 77-82 High Street, London E1 7QX; features a tapestry of Picasso's “Guernica”; see report on page 12; [www.whitechapelgallery.org].



Edinburgh East Communist Party's banner honouring Jimmy Rutherford has been brought out of the archives and will be displayed in Leith Library during the Leith Festival in June. See listing for 10 June.

● Geoff Lawes is appealing for information concerning the 120 volunteers who signed a songbook owned by Hull Brigadier Sam Walters, in particular eight **Hull volunteers**: Jack (James) Atkinson, Bob (Robert) Wardle, Jim (James) Bentley, Morris (Maurice) Miller, Richard Mortimer, Joe (Joseph) Latus, Bernard (aka Leslie) Wilson and Sam (Samuel) Walters. Photographs of the signed pages of the songbook can be viewed online (see website address below). Lawes would be grateful for the identification of any of the, as yet, unidentified men and for more details about the Hull men. Morris Miller has had his story told on Jonathan Miller's blog: [<http://morrismiller.wordpress.com>] but other information is sparse. Particularly enigmatic, says Lawes, is the story of Jack Atkinson who died at Jarama. He spent his teenage years in Australia and was involved in the tenant eviction resistance movement in Brisbane and Sydney during the 1930s.

Write to Geoff Lawes, 223 Park Avenue, Hull HU5 4DE; tel: 01482-443 713 or use the email on the website where the signatures can be viewed: [www.geocities.com/irelandscw/docs-SamsAutographs.htm].

● Angela Jackson is writing a biography of **Patience Edney** (née Darton) who worked as a nurse in Spain during the civil war. She has been able to draw on several hours of interviews she recorded with Edney and those held by the Imperial War Museum Sound Archive, mainly relating to her early years and the time she spent in Spain. She would be grateful for any further information or material about Edney's life: letters, memoirs or personal recollections. Sources relating to the years after the civil war would be particularly helpful, for example, when she was working with Czechoslovak refugees, the time she spent in China in the 1950s and her role in the International Brigade Association. Jackson's email is [ajackson2spain@yahoo.com].

● Ronald Thompson (36 Brockhurst Walk, Wigan WN3 5UG) would like to find out more about **Teddy Blood**, who was a Brigadier, survived the war, but died many years ago. He would also like information about any volunteers from Wigan.

● From Vienna, Susanne Berger-Achatz is trying to find out what happened to her uncle, **Hans (Johann) Berger**, born in 1910 in Austria, who was a member of the XI International Brigade. He also used aliases: Willy Reif, Paul Birkner, Leo Czech and Alexander Bauer and studied at the International Lenin School in Moscow from 1936-1938. Email: [susanne.berger@orf.at] ortel: +43 (1) 360 69-19155.

● Fran Bowman is searching for more information about two **Spanish refugees** who stayed with her father, George John Jones, who was a Communist candidate for Hornsey in the 1940s. She writes: "At that time we gave hospitality to various refugees including two young Spanish men who would have arrived in about 1938/9. I am trying to trace one of these men or his family. The only



Unveiling in 1996 of a memorial to International Brigade and Republican prisoners held at San Pedro de Cardeña, near Burgos, in 1996. See "San Pedro de Cardeña" below.

name I have is Ernesto – we called him Luis, perhaps to cover his real name... I met him in Paris in 1963/64. I seem to remember that he could not return to Spain. I imagine he was a Communist." Contact [franbowman3@yahoo.co.uk].

● Nacho García, born in Burgos but now living in the French Basque Country, is researching the prisoner-of-war and concentration camp at the monastery at **San Pedro de Cardeña**, near Burgos. In 1996 he organised a commemoration and erected a sculpture that was removed by the local council. He says he has read "Prisoners of the Good Fight" by Carl Geiser along with the memoirs of fellow Brigadiers Bob Doyle and George Wheeler and studies of the British and Irish volunteers. There is also a memoir of a Basque priest who was a prisoner there and he has consulted Spanish archives. He would like to be advised about further sources of information and archives. Contact [nachoyeli@hotmail.fr] or write to: Rue de Bernard de Coral 27, 66122 Urrugne, France.

● John Fletcher is trying to discover more about his late father, Capt **George Fletcher**, from Manchester, who was adjutant to British Battalion Commander Sam Wild. He was also a machine-gunner, was wounded several times and fought in the Battle of the Ebro. Email: [jfletcher@expressandecho.co.uk] ortel: 01392-442 235 or 07730-910 454.

● **Alfred Sterling (Stirling)** was a Jewish volunteer from London, taken prisoner in April 1938. Jonathan Address found a letter from the International Brigade Dependents & Wounded Aid Committee and a clipping from the *Daily Herald* dated 2 April 1938 listing a number of British Brigadiers who had been captured. The letter, addressed to Mr J Address of 79 Manor Road, Stoke Newington, was in reply to his letter of 31 March enquiring about Alf Stirling. It went on to say they had reason to believe that the cutting from the *Daily Herald* and Reuters was correct and would be in touch when they got further news. Contact Marlene Sidaway (see page 2 for details).

● Jean Morris is researching the life of **Jack Carney**, originally from Widness, Cheshire. He was in the US during the 1920s working alongside Jim Larkin and edited a newspaper called *Labor Unity*

in San Francisco in about 1925. Later, Carney was in Ireland with Larkin; he was Larkin's "right-hand man" for about 20 years until they quarrelled, says Morris, apparently over Larkin's instructions not to speak in support of the International Brigades in Ireland. Carney then returned to England, where he died in London in the late 1950s. Contact Jean Morris on [jean.m.morris@btinternet.com] or write to her at: 10 Gleneagles Drive, Widness, Cheshire WA8 9JH.

● From Israel, Miriam Bulwar David-Hay is seeking information about her great-great uncle who was born in Poland and volunteered for Spain. **Fajwel Kusmierski** anglicised his first name to Philip when, after Spain, he settled in London with his wife, Esther. He died in the late 1970s. Bulwar David-Hay: [apollo@netvision.net.il].

● Eileen Fisher is researching her late father, **Philip Sidney John Bradford**, born 18 September 1910. He lived in Keith Road, Barking, Essex, in the 1930s. She was told as a child that he was "involved" in the Spanish Civil War, but there are no such records in the archives. However, his sister, Alice Green, took in Spanish refugees either at the address above or in Ripple Road. Contact [eileen.fisher@ntlworld.com].

● Derek Walker has a particular interest in postal history and especially in censored mail from the two world wars. He also has in his possession three envelopes which he is fairly sure have Spanish Civil War connections. They are addressed to **Sir Daniel Stevenson**, 5 Clevedon Road, Glasgow W2, and are dated December 1937. Two are post-marked from Spain and one from Marseilles, the latter with a Scottish Ambulance Unit stamp and the Comandante's signature – T(?) Jacobson(?). Walker would like to find out more about Sir Daniel. He knows he was a Liberal and had strong philanthropic links to Glasgow. Contact [der12mouwal@hotmail.co.uk] or write to: 12 Mount Grove, Sunderland SR4 7NW.

If you do not have an email to reply to queries, contact the IBMT Secretary (details on page 2) and your message will be passed on. Please share your information about Brigadiers with the IBMT's researcher, Jim Carmody. Send it to [jamescarmody@yahoo.co.uk].

From the Ebro to the Battle of Britain

By Geoff Cowling

Some time ago I stumbled upon the following reference in the Imperial War Museum archive to a Luftwaffe propaganda film of August 1940 describing a “Stuka attack on England... escorted by Bf 109Es, including one with Spanish Civil War markings “Arriba de Campo” and crossed swords, before peeling away to attack ‘ports, industrial installations and airfields’. Oil storage tanks blaze below.”

This fascinated me because I have long thought there might be direct photographic evidence linking the Luftwaffe Condor Legion’s activities in the Spanish Civil War with aerial conflict which took place in the skies over Britain in the Second World War. We know from accounts written by RAF Battle of Britain pilots that they were taken aback by the sophisticated “finger four – schwarm” combat tactics used by the Luftwaffe’s pilots, who developed their considerable combat skills in the skies of Spain. Our inexperienced pilots suffered heavy casualties in the first phases of the Battle of Britain until the RAF stopped flying in their traditional parade ground “vic” formations and adopted the far more flexible German aerial battle tactics.

Would the Luftwaffe film actually show the very same Messerschmitts that first appeared in the skies of Catalonia above the Ebro battlefield, flying over southern England? I asked the Imperial War Museum if I could see the film, but they told me it was in a precarious condition and had never been viewed since it was catalogued shortly after the Second World War. It could only be renovated at considerable cost. I persisted and to their eternal credit the museum renovated the film and I collected a copy from their archivist, Matthew Lee.

In fact the DVD showed the aircraft to be facto-



Two Messerschmitt 109s over Britain, one with crossed daggers and “Arriba el Campo” slogan.

Photo courtesy of the Trustees of the Imperial War Museum.

ry-fresh Messerschmitt 109Es and not the 109D which operated in Spain just two years earlier. And the markings themselves raised as many questions as answers. As can be seen from the photo above (taken as a still from the DVD), the 109E closest to the camera aircraft carries the slogan “Arriba el Campo” along the engine nose. Above the slogan is a symbol of crossed daggers. This aircraft and another in the background is also painted with a “top hat” symbol on the fuselage.

Gerald Howson, the renowned expert on Spanish Civil War aviation and author of the definitive “Arms for Spain”, confirms that the “top hat” symbol was carried by the 2/88 Group of the Condor Legion. The slogan “Arriba el Campo” (“Up the Countryside”) has no meaning on its own. Howson believes it may have its origins in a poem of that name by the Falangist poet Dionisio Ridruejo which could have been adopted as a battle slogan by one of the Condor Legion squadrons, but we have no evidence to prove this is true. The crossed dagger symbol too remains a mystery. Historian Paul Preston points to a passing similarity to the Carlist emblem, the Burgundian Cross, but a check of images on Google shows significant differences. And its similarity to the symbol of the

Falange (Spanish fascist party) is only passing.

As I said, this exercise has raised as many questions as answers. Whatever the origins of these symbols, it does show that the Luftwaffe pilots gazing at us from these photos honed their fighting skills in the skies of Spain – which they then went on to use in the Battle of Poland, the Battle of France and the Battle of Britain. For them the Second World War did not begin in September 1939, but in 1936 when the Luftwaffe first appeared in the skies of Spain. Perhaps we should reflect on this next year, the 70th anniversary of the Battle of Britain, and show this three-minute film in public for the very first time since it was made in 1940 as part of the 2010 IBMT lecture day at the Imperial War Museum in whose archives this film has been stored and preserved.

It will demonstrate just how right and far-sighted were the members of the International Brigades to volunteer and sacrifice their lives in the fight against the rise of fascism in Europe when they did. It’s a pity that others were not listening and the world had to endure the devastating consequences which followed.

Geoff Cowling is a former British consul general in Barcelona and has served as an IBMT Trustee.

LETTERS

Education pack

The IBMT has an education pack with lesson plans and resources based on the International Brigades, Aid for Spain and the Basque child refugees. These are targeted at different age groups: 8-10, 11-13 and 14-16.

I am currently rewriting and updating the material. I would like to make it much more “local” and have sections that can link schools to their local Spanish Civil War connections. I would also like to make some materials available to support post-16 courses.

I would be grateful if anyone has jpegs of local IB memorials to send them to my email. Like-

wise, if anyone wants a copy of the CD-rom with the materials, contact me at the same email.

Richard Thorpe

[thorpe.ortiz@tiscali.co.uk]

The Editor adds: The education pack has now been added to the IBMT website. See [www.international-brigades.org.uk/education.htm].

Thanks

On behalf of the Doyle family I would like to thank the many people and organisations around the world that offered their sympathy and condolences on the death of my father, Bob Doyle. I would especially thank those that made

contributions to the International Brigade Memorial Trust and to the appeal for the people of Gaza made in his name in Dublin.

The strength of feeling was demonstrated by the attendances at the funeral in London and the ceremony in Dublin. The family takes the tremendous reaction to my father’s death as a tribute to him and the ideas that drove his life-long struggle for peace and social justice.

Robert Doyle

London

The Editor adds: A collection of tributes to Doyle and obituaries can be found at [www.geocities.com/IrelandSCW/ibvol-BobDoyle.htm].

Against all odds: the Jews from Palestine



Among the International Brigade volunteers were 300 Jews from Palestine, of whom 70 were killed in Spain. Eran Torbiner's documentary "Madrid Before Hanita" – now available on DVD (left) – tells their story through contemporary footage

and interviews with surviving veterans and family members.

Most of the volunteers were communists who saw in fascism the chief enemy of humanity in general and of Jews in particular. Torbiner's film, which had its UK première at London's Renoir cinema in March as part of the London Socialist Film Coop's 2009 season, shows how the leaders of the Zionist left were disquieted by the prospect of young idealist Jews preferring the struggle in Spain over the Zionist project, and thus coined the slogan: "Hanita Before Madrid", Hanita being the first Jewish kibbutz founded in Israel.

The volunteers from Palestine also faced criticism for their beliefs in equality and coexistence with the Arab population. In addition, they were not supported by the leadership of the Commu-



Jewish volunteers in "Madrid Before Hanita".

nist Party in Palestine, which prioritised fortification of the local movement and asked them to stay. Finally, they had to deal with the doubts and fears of their own families.

In 1939, when Spain finally fell into the hands of the fascists, most of the volunteers continued their war against Nazi Germany as partisans or as soldiers in the Allied forces.

Torbiner's film, which runs for 58 minutes, was produced during 2002-2006 and was filmed in Israel, Spain, France and Germany.

To purchase the DVD (£12), email Eran Torbiner at [erantor@gmail.com].



Above: Smith and Harrison following their return from Spain. Left: Smith's biography.

To Australia, via Spain

By Des Speight

Joan Harrison, who died in October 1983, and Richard Smith, who died in April 2003, both volunteered for service with the International Brigades through Spanish Medical Aid.

Harrison, a St Bartholomew's Hospital-trained theatre nurse, served in the Madrid area and at Belchite before being assigned to the British hospital at Huete at a time when Tudor Hart and Nan Green were working there. At Huete she met Smith, a Geordie ambulance driver from South Shields. He had served at Jarama in February 1937 and at Brunete later that year, where he was injured when his vehicle was blown up, and had been sent to Huete for recovery.

They were dispatched as an ambulance team to the Teruel front to provide immediate aid to wounded comrades using a large Bedford ambulance which had been donated by the Welsh miners.

After the fall of Teruel, they continued to work

together during the Aragón retreats until March 1938 when Smith was given rest leave in England. He soon returned with a two-ambulance delivery to Barcelona, where he met up again with Harrison, only for both of them soon to be sent back to England by Fred Copeman, British Battalion Commander, to deliver a hand-written letter to King Street (London headquarters of the Communist Party).

In England, and now married, they moved to Tyneside where Richard had relatives, but later moved to the London area where Joan had been brought up. They had two children. The son they named Duncan Tapsell after Political Commissar Walter Tapsell, who had married them in Alcorisa in Spain before being killed at Calaceite, Aragón. During the Second World War Joan continued nursing, while Richard trained tank instructors.

In 1956 they migrated to Australia with their teenage children and changed the family name from Smith to Bryant.

Sixty-one years after his service in the Spanish Civil War, the King of Spain, Juan Carlos 1, invested Richard Bryant with the Spanish knighthood "Caballero de la Orden del Mérito Civil".

I was determined that their 14-month contribution to the fight against fascism in Spain should not be forgotten, so I wrote "Australia's Spanish Knight: Fourteen Months, Sixty One Years".

Des Speight is a retired teacher and educationalist, living in Seacliff, near Adelaide, Australia.

"Australia's Spanish Knight" can be ordered direct from Speight's website: [www.dlks.com].

In brief...



● The organisers responsible for the superb "Echoes of Spain" mosaic in London's Portobello Road have produced

this commemorative booklet. The mosaic depicts International Brigade volunteers from the North Kensington area of west London, along with the many Spanish Republican refugees who settled there. All this is explained in the booklet, along with short biographies of the main individuals involved. The book can be ordered for £6 including p&p from Eddie Adams at [samstjohn2003@yahoo.co.uk].



● Many International Brigaders around the world experienced a difficult homecoming after the Spanish Civil War. Firmly in this category were the **Swiss volunteers**, who faced up to four months in jail for

violating Switzerland's neutrality laws – although these were subsequently waived in the case of French Resistance fighters. "Die Schweizer Spanienfreiwilligen" by Peter Huber (Rotpunktverlag, Zürich, 2009) tells the story of the 766 Swiss volunteers, of whom 170 died in Spain. Last December the Swiss parliament finally agreed to exonerate the volunteers, of whom only five survived when the vote was taken. Similar motions had been rejected in 1969 and 2003.

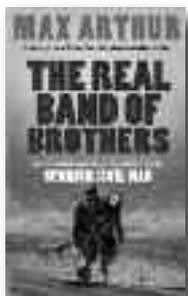


● This reprint of the booklet "70th Anniversary of Spanish Civil War & Counter-Revolution, 1937-2007" focuses on the **volunteers from Manchester and the North West**. Edited by

Brian Bamford, it includes contributions from Dolores Long, daughter of British Battalion Commander Sam Wild, and Somerset trade union activist Dave Chapple, who was a friend of Brigadier Andy Andrews, as well as extracts from Brigadier Ralph Cantor's unpublished diary. There are some interesting brief biographical details about the local volunteers. The cover features a portrait of anarchist leader Buenaventura Durruti and several of the articles adopt a highly critical view of the Spanish Republican authorities and the Communist Party. The booklet can be ordered for £3.49, including p&p, from Brian Bamford at 46 Kingsland Road, Rochdale OL11 3HQ.

Seventy years on: veterans recount their experiences of war

“The Real Band of Brothers: First-hand Accounts from the Last British Survivors of the Spanish Civil War” by Max Arthur; £18.99 (Collins, London, 2009)



Reviewed by Jim Jump

Interviews with eight surviving British and Irish International Brigaders in 2008 form the basis of “The Real Band of Brothers”. Written by oral historian Max Arthur, there are chapters on each of the volunteers: Paddy Cochrane, Jack Edwards, Les Gibson, Penny Feiwel, Lou Kenton and Sam Lesser, plus two who have died since the book was written: Bob Doyle and Jack Jones.

The book was launched in conjunction with the History Channel’s two-part TV documentary “The Brits Who Fought For Spain” that was broadcast in March – the 70th anniversary of the end of the Spanish Civil War.

Written by a best-selling author and produced by a major publisher, the

book has been welcomed by the IBMT for its potential to reach a very wide audience, among whom many might not otherwise know about the International Brigades.

Most of those featured in the book have already written their memoirs and/or been interviewed. However, the experiences of Les Gibson and Paddy Cochrane are not as widely known as the others and are a welcome inclusion.

As the publicity blurb that went out with the book states, the story of the 2,300 men and women from the British Isles is unique: they volunteered to lay down their lives for a cause, believing passionately that the Spanish Republic’s fight was their fight too. That commitment and passion shines through the accounts in Arthur’s book.

From union leader to nurse, Egyptologist to IRA activist, the survivors recount their compelling and often harrowing tales, revealing their idealism, pride, regrets, and feelings about the legacy of the actions they took.

Among them is Jack Jones. “For most young people there was a feeling of frustration, but some were determined to do anything that seemed possible, even if it meant death, to try to stop the spread of fascism,” he said. “It was real, and it had to be stopped.”

Story of the Cypriot volunteers

“Spanish Thermopylae” by Paul Philippou Strongos; £14.99 (Warren & Pell, Barcelona, 2009)

Reviewed by Richard Baxell



Paul Philippou’s new work is a thorough and extremely comprehensive study of the role of the sixty or so Cypriots who fought for the Spanish Republic, particularly with the British and US battalions in the XV International Brigade.

Like other recent works on the various national contingents in the International Brigades, Philippou makes regular reference to the infamous Moscow material in order to provide a valuable and detailed explanation of the background of the Cypriot volunteers and their particular motivations for volunteering for Spain.

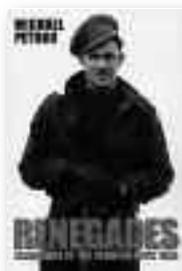
The author then turns to an examination of the volunteers’ experiences within Spain itself. Here the tale becomes somewhat harder to follow for, in attempting to write a comprehensive history of all of the Cypriot volunteers, Philippou was faced with a major problem. Cypriots served with myriad units in Spain (including medical units and the POUM militia) and Philippou’s laudable attempt to describe all of these has resulted in the story often becoming rather confusing and obscured by detail. This is exacerbated by the narrative style which is frequently broken-up by the inclusion of biographical notes, tables and lists, which might have been better placed in footnotes or in appendices.

However, there is no doubting the thoroughness of Philippou’s research and he has assembled an astonishing and encyclopaedic array of information on the Cypriots. Whilst this somewhat over-ambitious book might appear too dense for the casual reader, the inclusion of a detailed index ensures that it will prove to be an indispensable reference work to anyone with a specialist interest in the subject.

Canadians under the spotlight

“Renegades: Canadians in the Spanish Civil War” by Michael Petrou; £16.99 (Warren & Pell, Barcelona, 2008)

Reviewed by Richard Baxell



The publication of Michael Petrou’s “Renegades: Canadians in the Spanish Civil War” completes a set of works on the English-speaking battalions in the XV International Brigade which draw on the material held in the Moscow archives.

Petrou begins with a detailed portrait of the volunteers and their motivations for going to Spain. Much of the picture that emerges is very similar to that of the British and Americans: working-class committed anti-fascists, of whom roughly three-quarters were members of the Communist Party. However, unlike the British and Americans, a large proportion was unemployed and many were born not in Canada, but in central Europe. For this immigrant army “a blow against fascism in Spain would be

a blow against the Nazis in Germany, the Poles in ‘West Ukraine’, or the ‘Whites’ in Finland”.

In part two, Petrou devotes only 50 or so pages to the events in Spain itself, perhaps because the author was concerned with concentrating on new material and issues rather than retreading over old ground. This is no easy task of course, with four books in the past 10 years on the XV Brigade. Fighting as part of the same military unit and with some Canadians actually fighting within the US Abraham Lincoln Battalion, the story is inevitably very similar.

The third part of Petrou’s book addresses the subject of much contention: discipline in the International Brigades and the role of the Communist Party. Not surprisingly, a small number of Brigaders cracked under the appalling pressures of combat in Spain and were punished for drinking heavily or deserting. However, as Petrou states: “Many of the deserters did not want to quit the war so much as they needed a break.” And whilst there were political differences amongst the Canadians (and, it appears, with their American commanders), in general, letters home “suggest they were much more concerned with missing mail, food and cigarettes than with politics”. As one Canadian pointed out: “Well, shit, we were in the trenches most of the time.”

The book concludes with a section containing portraits of three particular Canadians in Spain (including the pioneering doctor Norman Bethune), another on the experiences of Canadians post-Spain, a short bibliography and an extremely useful appendix containing details of all the Canadians in Spain. For anyone interested in Canada and the International Brigades in the Spanish Civil War, this will be required reading.

The book is published in Canada and the US by University of British Columbia Press: www.ubcpres.ca/search/title_book.asp?BookID=5268.

Marshall Mateer



Brigadier Joseph Kahn (right) with the IBMT contingent at the Whitechapel Gallery opening; pictured from his right are Marlene Sidaway, Max Arthur, Myra Hunter, Pauline Fraser, Jim Jump and Mick Jones.

‘Guernica’ returns to East End

By Marshall Mateer

In January 1939 Picasso’s “Guernica” was displayed at the Whitechapel Gallery in London’s East End to increase support for the Republican cause and raise funds for Spanish refugees and the International Brigades.

Labour leader Clement Attlee opened the show and the entrance charge was waived for those who could offer the gift of a pair of boots in good condition; thousands saw the painting and over 400 pairs of boots were stacked along the wall under the painting before being sent to Spain.

Picasso’s depiction of the effects of ariel bombing on Guernica in April 1937 by General Franco’s German and Italian allies was all too soon to be experienced by the people of the East End in the Blitz.

To mark the 70th anniversary of the exhibition, the newly-refurbished Whitechapel Gallery is showing the full-size tapestry copy of Picasso’s masterpiece as part of an installation called “The Nature of the Beast” by artist Goshka Macuga. The tapestry, which usually hangs at the United Nations’ headquarters in New York, was made by Jacqueline de la Baume Dürrbach under Picasso’s supervision.

The installation revolves around the events following US Secretary of State Colin Powell’s presentation to the UN Security Council in Febru-

ary 2003 prior to the US-led invasion of Iraq.

When Powell afterwards faced the world’s media outside the Security Council chamber, the tapestry was especially shrouded in a blue drape hiding from view the iconic image of the “shock and awe” of ariel bombardment. At the Whitechapel, Macuga has hung the huge tapestry in front of an even larger UN-blue curtain running the width of the gallery. A blue carpet leads to a round table with leather chairs referencing the table in the UN chamber.

The table is also a glass-topped display case which houses a fascinating array of archive materials from the original show, including International Brigaders with Attlee, political activity in the East End at the time and more recent examples of the image of “Guernica” being used for protest.

The gallery space has been designed so that it can be booked by groups wishing to hold meetings and Macuga hopes it will “provide a springboard for further narratives around this iconic image and connections between art, propaganda and war”.

A longer version of this review and information about the bombing of Guernica and Picasso’s painting are on the Shapesoftware website at [www.shapesoftware.net/pages/viewpage.asp?uniqid=12397].

See Diary dates: page 7.

Our new email information service

By Mary Greening, IBMT Membership Secretary

The purpose of our new email information service is to notify members about events, television programmes, articles, books and other matters of interest.

As the Newsletter comes out three times a year it is impossible to publish all events and matters of interest, as many events occur “between Newsletters”. However, it is now relatively easy to email members at fairly short notice to let them know what is happening.

Obviously the service only applies to those members who have given me their email addresses.

The lists are based on regions: England South East & London; England South West; England Midlands; England North East; England North West; Wales; Scotland East; Scotland West; Northern Ireland; Republic of Ireland.

I rely on members informing me about matters of interest. When you have information that you want me to send to other members either nationwide or in your region, then please email me directly.

If you do not want to be on the email lists then let me know your name and the town you live in and I will remove your name from the lists.

Mary Greening can be contacted at [memsec@international-brigades.org.uk].

T-shirt for Jack Jones

The banner of the No.1 Major Attlee Company of the British Battalion adorns this latest t-shirt from Philosophy Football in honour of Jack Jones,



who was the No.1 Company’s Political Commissar. The sleeveprint says: “Salud! Jack Jones 1913-2009”. Priced £20.99, profits from sales go towards the IBMT. In five sizes, the t-shirt can be ordered from the Philosophy Football website: [www.philosophyfootball.com] or tel: 020-8802 3499.

A national memorial in Madrid

From front page

for the more than 500 volunteers from Britain and Ireland who died in Spain and whose remains lie in unmarked graves, he added.

Both Jump and the ambassador paid tribute to former IBMT President Jack Jones. “His life teaches us that each generation must fight for freedom, justice and democracy and that solidarity has no frontiers,” said Jump.

The costs of raising the new plaque were shared by the IBMT and ALBA and the ceremony was organised by the Madrid-based Association of Descendants of the Spanish Exile (ADEE).

Many ADEE members from around the world attended the unveiling, which followed a homage at an adjacent memorial in the cemetery to those Spanish Republican exiles who fought with the Allies during the Second World War

or who joined the French Resistance to combat Nazism.

Representatives from the Spanish government and the Canadian, French, Russian and US embassies were among those present – in the case of the US, for the first time at an event of this sort.

Many Brigaders who were killed in the defence of Madrid were buried in Fuencarral Cemetery during the civil war, but their graves were destroyed following Franco’s victory in 1939.

See [www.exiliados.org].