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Spanish Civil War Tribute to the victims and fighters for freedom



Watercolour painting by unknown local artist of Joseph Fillingham, Bury & District Trades Council delegate, who was killed in action at Teruel in the Spanish Civil War

Trade unionists and members of Trade Union Councils in the North West of England have produced this booklet. The Committee of trade union activists behind it have not sought funds from either Government or party political organisations. We are totally independent of stipends from established institutions. We have, however received help from the following individuals, libraries, museums and research bodies: The Working Class History Library; the Peoples' History Museum; Alice Lock and the Tameside Local Studies Archive; the Bury Times archives; Bury Library; the Rochdale Library; the Manchester Local Studies Library; Dave Chapple, Secretary of Bridgewater TUC in Somerset & Chair in 2007-8 of the National Shop Stewards' Network who sent us some research material from the Moscow Archives; Pedro Cuadrado for his personal memorabilia and **Northern Voices** journal for supplying some of the funding to make this all possible.

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75TH ANNIVERSARY OF SPANISH CIVIL WAR *THE AFTERMATH* 1936 - 2011



- Buenaventura Durruti -

Commemorative booklet of the Spanish Civil War
by Trade Unionists in North West of England

The Heart of Darkness, a Spanish puzzle & the professional historians

WHY did the young men, mostly men and mostly young, from 1936 onwards go to Spain to fight in the Spanish Civil War for a system and culture they could have scarcely understood? Karl Marx had observed that the knowledge of Spanish history in his time was inadequate: 'There is perhaps no country except Turkey, so little known to and so falsely judged by Europe as Spain.' And, according to the man who became an expert on Spain, Gerald Brenan, Marx said this was



Show me the grave of James Keogh (courtesy of Northern Voices)

because historians 'instead of viewing the strength and resources of these peoples in their provincial and local organisation have drawn at the source of their court histories'. Brenan, in his book *The Spanish Labyrinth: an account of the Social & Political Background of the Spanish Civil War*, claimed that 'standard histories of the [Spanish] Peninsular give a false impression of the events they describe.' He adds: 'Spain, both economically and psychologically, differs so greatly from the other countries of Western Europe that the words of which most history is made—feudalism, autocracy, liberalism, Church, Army, Parliament, trade union and so forth—have quite other meanings there to what they have in France or England.'

In this edition we begin by reproducing a letter sent by *International Brigade* volunteer Ralph Cantor from a postal address in Albacete. Cantor is writing, in 1937, to his relatives Norah and Issy describing what he takes to be the 'conditions and events' in Spain at that time. It is a remarkably articulate account for a 21-year-old young man: one that gives some attention to the diversity, the different languages of Spain and to what Gerald Brenan calls 'the strength of provincial and municipal feeling'; as Ralph writes: 'it is impossible to gain any grasp of events, without some knowledge of the contrasts and conditions'. It shows what may well be the impact of the induction he received at the Albacete *International Brigade Training Camp*, yet he writes: 'They [the Spaniards] are at least 60% illiterate and in this and in the no. [sic] of organisations present a close analogy to the Russian Revolution.' But if Spain in early 1937 presents 'a close analogy to the Russian Revolution' to Ralph Cantor, as a young communist from Manchester carefully schooled by the party commissars and stationed well away from the passionate political ferment of Catalonia; surely this backs George Orwell's view in late December 1936, as represented in his *Homage to Catalonia*, that the 'Anarchists were still in virtual control of Catalonia and the revolution still in full swing ... It was the first time that I had ever been in a town where the working class was in the saddle.'

Last year was the 70th anniversary of the publication of Orwell's *Homage to Catalonia* and the occasion was used by the historian Professor Paul Preston, *International Brigade Memorial Trust* patron and history professor at the *London School of Economics*, to pour scorn on Orwell's eyewitness account thus: 'I would rank "Homage to Catalonia" alongside Spike Milligan's "Adolf Hitler:

My Part in His Downfall", another interesting book by someone who was a foot-soldier playing a tiny part in a much wider conflict' [see *IBMT Newsletter Autumn 2008*]. Professor Preston is the author of *The Spanish Civil War 1936-39*, a distinguished work of liberal scholarship. Editor of the *IBMT Newsletter*, Jim Jump, says 'Time to stop paying homage to Orwell's version of events' and he adds: 'The creation of a communist [controlled] state in Spain—as implied by Orwell—would have run counter to that

objective and was therefore never his [Stalin's] aim'. Of Orwell, Mr Jump writes 'He was wrong' to suggest 'that they [the communists] would smash their political rivals ...'. This represents a blinkered historical view given that Andre Marty, the Comintern representative, declared as early as October 1936 that 'After victory we will get even with them [the anarchists], all the more so since at that point we will have a strong army', and *Pravda*, in December 1936, stated 'cleaning up of Trotskyist and anarcho-syndicalist elements will be carried out with the same energy as in the USSR.'

Professor Preston is undoubtedly an able historian and one whom Mr Jim Jump properly describes as 'an expert on the Spanish civil war'. I believe he belongs to that great tradition of liberal scholarship [including communist historians on Spain] that Noam Chomsky in his brilliant essay 'Objectivity & Liberal Scholarship' [1968] claimed lacked what could be called *street wisdom* or what Chomsky described as 'the human element'. Noam Chomsky, in this essay, also warned against the underlying intellectual 'elitist bias' of liberal historians [and communist historians] that attempts to dismiss aspects of social struggle that does not fit in with the dominant values of their scholastic model: when he reviewed Gabriel Jackson's study *The Spanish Republic & the Civil War: 1936-1939* [1965]. In 1968, Chomsky talked of 'the surprising gaps' in this war: 'one of the most intensively studied' and 'critical events of modern history'.

To counter the high blown tradition of these liberal and communist academics our brief booklet the 'Spanish Civil War & its aftermath', emphasises the human, social and anthropological aspects by drawing on the valuable first-hand memoirs of people like Ralph Cantor (*International Brigader*) from Cheetham Hill, George Orwell and Pedro Cuadrado (former *Catalan Republican Guard*) now living in Bolton, or even the letters of apprentice tailor James Keogh and the trade unionist Joe Fillingham from Ashton and Bury respectively. Professor Preston may say theirs' is only a limited 'part of a wider conflict', but in 1968, Chomsky observed then that the most extensive study of the most profound social movement in Spain, the trade union the *National Confederation of Labour (CNT): 'La CNT en la revolución española'* [1951-2] is relatively inaccessible, and neither its author nor many of the refugees who will never write memoirs but who ▶▶

▶▶ might provide invaluable personal testimony have been consulted, apparently, by writers of the major historical works.' In a way, the on-the-spot ethnographic studies like George Orwell's *Homage to Catalonia* and journals like that of Ralph Cantor, with all their faults, are almost always going to be more enduring than any historical manuscripts presented by the professional academics. Ralph Cantor's comments in both his journal and letters [see below], allowing for the obvious factual mistakes and his partisanship to the *Communist Party*, are valuable because they are not written for publication and have an innate ring of honesty.

Recently George Orwell's eyewitness account in *Homage to Catalonia* has been nominated by Timothy Garton-Ash as a journalistic gold standard by which all war reporting should now be measured. It may well become like Tolstoy's *War & Peace*: after all, outside the pages of that novel I cannot recall reading an account of the *Battle of Borodino* or of *Austerlitz*. This confession may well shock Paul Preston, but I suspect most people would profit more from reading Spike Milligan, George Orwell or Leo Tolstoy than some of the musty texts of our professional historians. And as I write this, I can't help but feel how much more I would prefer to have a chat with Cantor, Keogh, Cuadrado, Spike Milligan, Orwell, or even enjoy a whisky with Stuart Christie, than with Christie's former tutor, Professor Preston, and the scholarly professionals at the *London School of Economics*.

This is not the place to question the commitment of academics to the values of parliamentary democracy. The problem with the approach of historians, like Preston and Jackson, is methodological, in so far as they tend to dismiss less articulate impulses of trade unionists, peasants and ethnographic accounts such as Orwell's, and show what Chomsky calls evidence of 'a deep bias against social revolution and ... has led the author [Gabriel Jackson] to misrepresent crucial events and to overlook major historical currents.' A troubling habit of Preston is his crude categorisation of other historians and authors into political camps: thus we learn Antony Beevor is 'sympathetic to the anti-communist left'; Broué and Témime 'broadly Trotskyist'; Burnett Bolloten gives an 'essentially right-wing Cold War account' that 'has been taken by some left-wingers as pro-revolutionary'; one such 'left winger' for him is Professor Noam Chomsky.

To his credit Professor Preston makes little attempt to hide his own partisanship. Particularly Preston shows his political predilection when he writes: 'Several works on the Spanish Civil War were sponsored by the CIA... to propagate [the] idea' that 'it was the Stalinist suffocation of the revolution in Spain which led to Franco's victory.' Adding the following sentence, and so implying guilt by association: 'The success of a holy alliance of anarchists, Trotskyists and Cold [War?] Warriors has obscured the fact that Hitler, Mussolini, Franco and Chamberlain were responsible for the Nationalist victory, not Stalin' (p5 of *The Spanish Civil War* [2006]).

We are vastly extending this 3rd edition of our *Spanish Civil War* booklet to include the campaigns for blue plaques for local volunteers such as James Keogh and Joe Fillingham, as well as items on the Basque children in Greater Manchester and the



Ralph Cantor (Salford Working Class Movement Library)

aftermath of the war as represented in the film *Land & Freedom* and by the Spanish movement for *la recuperación de la memoria histórica*. There are two interviews: one I did with Jim Allen in 1995, the screen writer on the film *Land & Freedom*. Readers will also find corrections and updates based on more recent research. We are mindful of two recently published books in the North West of England: Bernard Barry's book *From Manchester to Spain* [2009] on the Greater Manchester volunteers who went to Spain and Chris Hall's book 'Not just Orwell' [2009] on the *Independent Labour Party* volunteers in the Spanish Civil War. Both these have helped us provide more local background to the events and, in Hall's case

to appreciate the *Independent Labour Party's* contribution to the fight against Franco's rebels, and in the Barry case to add some volunteers to our local list.

Yet, we still ponder why the Spaniards and Catalans were the first to seriously fight fascism? As Pedro Cuadrado told the *Bolton Evening News*: 'Barcelona was the first city to defeat the Fascists.' The Italian novelist, Ignazio Silone, in *School for Dictators* argued that the ragged armed Spaniards put up a stronger fight than the highly educated Germans with their powerful *Socialist, Communist Parties* and trade unions. This is the Spanish puzzle. Then why did these young men, who Jim Allen: the *Land & Freedom* screenwriter, called 'The cream of their generation' go to Spain? In his *Heart of Darkness*, Joseph Conrad has a character Marlow say: 'Now when I was a little chap I had a passion for maps. I would look for hours at South America, or Africa, or Australia, and lose myself in the glories of exploration.' At that time there were many blank spaces on the earth, and when I saw one that looked particularly inviting on a map (but they all looked that) I would put my finger on it and say, When I grow up I will go there...' When I was young, my Aunty Annie bought me a cheap tin globe of the world that split in two and you could hide toffees in, the kind you could buy at the post-office. I used to stare at it and make out, what seemed to me the exotic names of Paris and Spain, and I'd dream of going there when I got older. Years later in February 1963, a week after my wedding, we met with the young sons of Spanish exiles in a house in the working-class area of Bellville in Paris; the next week we were in Barcelona armed with my dad's camera; some contact addresses; letters of introduction; and a map of Spain for a propaganda mission against the Franco regime. My Aunty Annie had a hard life as a mill worker at *Dunlop Cotton Mills* and an arm slightly deformed by a scalding from a kettle when young, neither she nor I could have realised what influence that small globe would have upon me. I suspect the young lads who manned the *International Brigades*, the *ILP militias* and the lassies who became the foreign nurses, were moved rather like me, Marlow and Joseph Conrad himself, to replace the unknown with the known: for the exotic blank space that was *España* in our grey northern towns to turn into something 'unspeakable' that when it is encountered in the flesh to reveal, if anything, a darkness in our own heart. ●

Socorro RI, Plaza 161, Albacete.*

Dear Norah and Issy,

... Firstly the Fascists hold one half of Spain exactly, the chief reason being that this half includes all the barren and unproductive regions in industry, agriculture and mineral wealth. Whenever Franco advanced, it was in such regions where no large concentration of workers lived...

In Spain a number of different languages are spoken, Catalan, Basque, Valenciano and Castilian ... Castilian which is also understood in every single province with varying degrees of fluency (eg. I speak a better Castilian than a Catalan) is the richest and most academic Spanish, being spoken in all of the countries in South America bar Brazil, where Portuguese politics prevail.

Previously [sic] to the establishment of the Republic in '31 [1931] to a smaller, although nevertheless still a large degree, Catalonia desired independence. Very much like Ireland, until July last year, she was prepared to fight for it, and you can well understand that the repressive measures of a semi-Fascist country, and later on of the reformist Republican govts. [,who] did not react favourably on a self-sustaining province [Catalonia], different in language, custom and ideology.**

Although Catalonia is still governed by the government of Spain, and the majority of workers favour this, the desire for independence is still reflected in the policy of the Anarchist party leaders, and military leaders, who are prepared to fight anybody who invades Catalonia and who do not send sufficient supplies and men to the Madrid and other fronts.

Catalonia where the Anarchists are in the majority (CNT and FAI have approx. 2,000,000 members) has 500,000 men under arms. These men have been stationed in Catalonia permanently in event of the Fascists penetrating that far. (Note also how this isolationist policy in this case proves abortive, as with such a large army, they are content to remain defensive on the Aragon front.*** This is the front to Catalonia, and no activity has been reported from there for several months.) The advent of the 'Frente Popular' persuaded the Anarchist and other genuine workers to throw their lot in with the new progressive Spain, yet it is apparent that such a deep-seated feeling is not yet eradicated. The remainder of Spain including the Catholic Basque country and Asturias province, is as a man behind the new Govt.

One thing to bear in mind is that during the street fighting the Anarchists were the only other party to form a rapid militia besides the CP [Communist Party] and as they have a larger membership, you can understand that they did the bulk of the work at that time. To revert to the distribution of agricultural and mineral wealth, the Fascists hold the barren province of Galicia in the NW [North West] corner of Spain [Ralph fails to say yet another language is spoken here: Gallego] (This province yields such veg. as potatoes and lettuce only and must be classed as extremely poor in comparison with the rest of Spain). They hold Toledo, a rich steel town which does not function, as all the technicians and man-power have been conscripted into Franco's army, they hold the rich vineyards [sic] and orange groves of Seville and fruit growing regions in Andalusia [sic]. The close proximity of the front has disorganised the Fascists' olive groves around Cordova. Together with the Rio Tinto mines, whose yieldings [sic] have been expropriated by the Fascists, from mainly British investors these constitute the total wealth of the Fascists.

On the other side, the Republic has the three largest towns, Madrid, Barcelona and Valencia. Barcelona plus Bilbao and Ovied are the largest industrial and steel towns in Spain. All three produce more now, than at any previous time. The Republic has the richest fruit growing region in the world in the provinces of Valencia and Murcia, and very rich olive region of Jaen province which realised 2,000,000 pesetas on the first crop earlier this year. The recent advance on the Cordova front made secure the mercury mines around Pozoblanco, Penarroyal and Fuentevejuna. These mines gave the Republic immense wealth, they almost constitute a monopoly of the world's supply. The govt. has already received many millions of £s in exchange this year. Also the govt. has the rich mining province of the Asturias. Oviedo is at present held half by the Fascists and the other half is ours. It does not produce anything at present....

The govt. has two thirds of the population, who although they all adhere to the 'Frente Popular' are all split in many organisations. UGT (Communist & Socialist United Trade Union) has a membership of something under 2,500,000. The CNT (Anarchist) Trade Unions a membership of something under 2,000,000. The CP has 350,000 members with over half at the front. The Socialist Party is the only other political party with a large membership. The Anarchist Party [sic] (FAI) is very small and so are the other numerous political organisations of the Frente Popular such as the Radical party, the Syndicalist party etc. The left Republicans which pursues almost a communist policy, and praise of the Soviet Union has large influence in Catalonia.**** The POUM (Trotskyist) and 'Friends of Durruti' an offspring of the same have been suppressed. The bulk of the 2,000,000 in the Anarchist trade unions are genuine and honest anti-Fascist workers who felt a desire to join an organised workers' movement. The Anarchist political following is reflected in the smallness of their party. The Friends of the Soviet Union, the SRI etc have very respectable memberships and there is also the JSU (a massive united communist and socialist youth affiliated to the YCI). There are consequences of this, about 15 daily papers on sale in Madrid and elsewhere.

When the Fascists advanced on Madrid, they concentrated all their forces on the Madrid front, and allowed our army to place all ours together, thus accelerating the institution of 'Mando Unico' (united command) by facilitating the grouping of our then inexperienced army. Their first move showing any military strategy was their attempt to cut the Madrid-Valencia road by attacking on the Jarama front. This move was taken when they despaired and abandoned the project of first entering Madrid, and it was left too late, when we had already built a good military machine with good arms and superlative aviation. Another move was the furtherance of 'fifth column' activity in Barcelona especially. There latest attempt on Bilbao has already failed and we are still advancing at Guadalajara and Cordova. The new govt. has the support of the UGT and CNT regional executives now, and its quick legislation which includes the calling up of half a million men is drawing the whole of the Spanish people behind it....

Although flesh figures very largely in the Spanish diet (to the exclusion of fruit which they think is grown for export only) the Spanish people are a remarkably strong race (mind they suffer from Rheumatism, Ghout [sic], etc as a result of this). They are also very handsome up till the age of thirty, when both sexes begin to wrinkle or grow labby. They are stoical and brave. They bear life at the front quite impassively as a reaction from their past hard times where there was almost slavery and not enough food and entertainment. They are at least 60% illiterate and this and the no. [sic] of organisations present a close analogy to the Russian Revolution, shall continue next week.

Love, Ralph [Cantor].

* The contents of this letter and references to the POUM being suppressed and the Bilbao offensive suggest it was written around May 1937.

** Catalonia is in fact a Region with three provinces—Barcelona, Taragona and Gerona—not a province.

*** Richard Alexander says: 'Militiamen organised by the CNT-FAI played a significant role in the defence of Madrid.' Confronting attacks on the city by Franco's forces in November 1936 and later. Anarchist leader, Durruti, was killed in Madrid in October 1936: his obituary appeared on the front of the International Brigade's 'Volunteer for Liberty'. Cipriano Mera then assumed command of the anarchist troops around Madrid.

**** The left Republicans, who formed the largest group in the Cortes were made up of Esquerra [Catalan nationalist party of the Left] their party, according to Gerald Brenan, was made up of the 'more ... progressive members of the middle and lower middle-classes'.

Preface to the 1st edition by Brian Bamford, electrician and Secretary of Tameside TUC España, Dígame—Spain speak to me?

THE EARLY 1960s was still an age of *coitus interruptus* and for me it was a phase of *premature ejaculation*. Had this not been so then in the terrible winter of 1962-3, I may well have raced Stuart Christie on his trip to a cell in Madrid's Carabancel jail. How our sins can save us from the worst of fates! When in Paris I informed Salvador Gurrucharri, a leader of the Libertarian Youth in exile, that my wife was three months pregnant, he dispatched us to the Barcelona barrio of Barceloneta to photograph shanty towns, then to gather information on Spanish working conditions in Alicante. In 1963, those young exile Spaniards of the Libertarian Youth would not put an expectant mother or a child at risk: resisting Franco had its limits.

Editing this booklet has been difficult because it does not reflect any of the standard products of the official trade unions which are often stiff stereotypical caricatures. They lack the dynamic growth of ethnographic anthropology.

That is why the Ralph Cantor diary is so valuable as it shows a young man growing up in Spain wrestling with the problems of war and a foreign culture. It was the same with Stuart and me growing up in Spain in the 1960s: him in a Spanish jail, me working for the *Casa Such* in Denia, Alicante and raising a child under Franco. Pedro Cuadrado's story is another story of a man growing up quick first in Catalonia, then in exile in France and England. All of us, International Brigader: Ralph Cantor; Catalan socialist: Pedro Cuadrado; English and Scottish anarchists: Bamford and Christie, were gad-flies in the rich mix of Spanish civilisation. No attempt to isolate the contribution of one of these elements or gad-flies from the context of Spain and its culture, can do justice to our understanding of the Spanish Civil War.

We trade unionists involved in this project hope that we have made a honest and useful contribution to this debate. ●

Introduction to 1st edition by Stuart Christie: The Spanish War that never died!

STUART CHRISTIE was part of a young Spanish anarchist group that made the last attempt on the life of General Franco in 1964. A recent Spanish television program dealing with the various attempts to kill the Spanish dictator after his forces won the Spanish Civil War in 1939 described the efforts of Mr Christie's group as 'brave but innocent'. Stuart Christie was born in 1946 in the working class district of Partick in West Glasgow as he says in his autobiography 'at a time before deep-fried Mars bars, curried-mutton pies and the urban blight set in'. He was a young apprentice member of the Union of Shop Distributive & Allied Workers (USDAW) and USDAW representative on Glasgow Trades Council. It was there he 'met Harry McShane a legend of "Red Clydeside" and...the old Clyde Workers' Committee of 1919'. He became involved in CND and the anti-nuclear campaigns such as Scots against War. He later came into contact with radical pacifists, Scottish and English anarchists, and later the young Spaniards of the Iberian Federation of Young Libertarians: sons and daughters of Spanish Civil War exiles. Stuart left for Paris at the end of July 1964 to meet with those resisting Franco there. In his recent autobiography Mr Christie says: 'Me? I was off to Spain; like George Orwell in 1936, because at that time and in that atmosphere it seemed the only conceivable thing to do.'

By the 11th, August 1964, after having met in Paris former civil war veterans such as bricky Cipriano Mera (described by Antony Beevor as 'the most effective anarchist commander in the civil war'), Stuart Christie was in Madrid carrying explosives. At the American Express Office where he went to get information he fell into a trap and was arrested by Franco's *Brigada Politico Social police*. He was later charged and found guilty of 'Banditry and Terrorism' and was to serve 3 years of a 20-year sentence: he was released on the 21st, September 1967. He later created the Anarchist Black Cross aid for prisoners and continued to have an active interest in left-wing politics. He is now publishing in English the 3-volume history of Spanish trade unionism by José Peirats 'The CNT in the Spanish Revolution' of which Noam Chomsky's in his essay 'Objectivity and liberal scholarship' said: 'This highly informative book should certainly be made available to an English speaking public.' Stuart is living down South now, but is probably better known in Spain and Scotland than he is in England, and it is a privilege that he has agreed to write an introduction to this pamphlet. ●

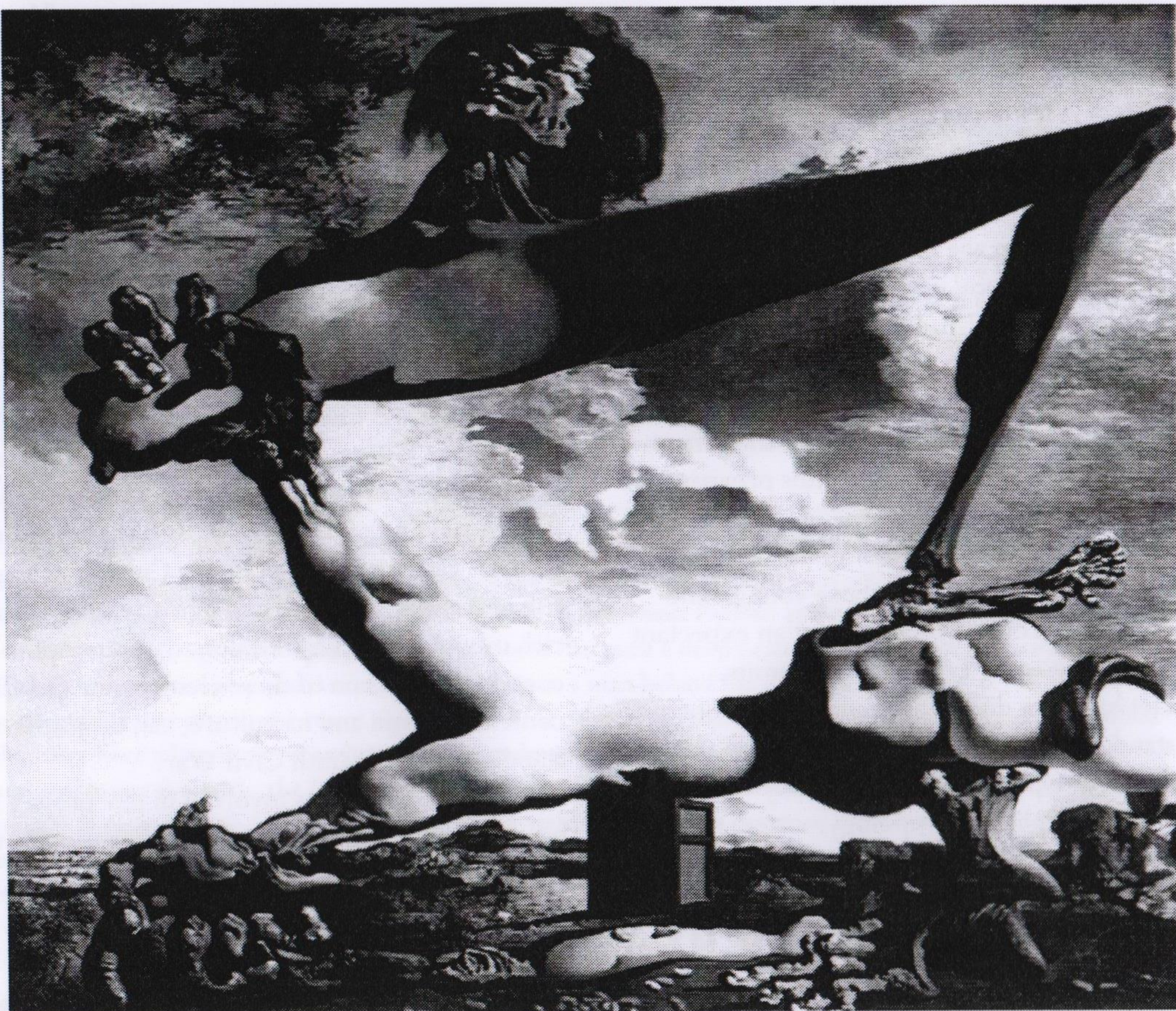
THE SPANISH CIVIL WAR did not end on 1st, April, 1939. It did not even end on November 20th, 1975, with the death of Franco. There remains much unfinished business; in particular the still unpaid debt to the victims of Francoism. It is now a matter of morality.

The transfer of power from Franco to Juan Carlos was seamless. Not one of Franco's enforcers, such as General Eduardo Blanco, the head of the hated secret police, or Carlos Aria Navarro, the butcher of Malaga and the architect of Francoist repression since the 1960s, a war criminal of the first magnitude — or any of the thousands of people responsible for the barbarous and legal spoliation of Spain and its people since 1939 has ever been brought to justice.

Even now, over thirty years since the dictator's death, the crimes of the Franco regime have never been addressed. The last statue of Franco in a public place may have disappeared, but his countless victims — many still lying in unknown and unmarked mass graves — and their relatives remain frustrated in their quest for justice.

We owe an enormous debt to the hundreds of thousands of brave men and women who fought, suffered, died and lost loved ones in the cause of freedom, resisting the reactionary priest-ridden, gun and prison-backed Franco regime. They are the forgotten dead of generations to whom we owe a profound obligation of remembrance — and a duty of commemoration.

Continued ▶▶



Soft Construction with Boiled Beans: Premonition of Civil War by Salvador Dalí.

► Over the past three or four years, democratic Spain has begun to recover the memory of what the years of dictatorship meant, and official Spain is slowly beginning to make up for the thirty lost years since the dictatorship ended. But legislation and acts rehabilitating the victims of Francoist repression have not had the impact they ought to have had, nor have they any real historic or legal value. Laudable as these gestures have been, the rehabilitation of the victims of Francoist repression will not be complete, morally and legally, unless there is public and institutional acknowledgment of the fact that it was their sacrifices that made possible the freedoms that Spain's constitution enshrines today. An inter-ministerial commission has now been set up specifically for the purpose of rehabilitating Franco's victims which allows us to hope that democratic Spain might finally pay off its outstanding debt to all those Spaniards and people of other nationalities who fought for its cause both during the Civil War and during the dictatorship.

And so, on the 70th anniversary of the Spanish Civil War and the 30th anniversary of the death of the last fascist dictator, the battle for the recovery of historical memory and dignity remains

to be won — and that battle will not be won until all the victims of Francoist repression have been fully rehabilitated — morally and judicially.

'Freedom is more than a word, more than the base coinage Of statesmen, the tyrant's dishonoured cheques, or the dreamer's mad

Inflated currency. She is mortal, we know, and made In the image of simple men who have no taste for carnage

But sooner kill and are killed than see that image betrayed.

Mortal she is, yet rising always refreshed from her ashes: She is bound to the earth, yet she flies as high as a passage bird

To home wherever man's heart with seasonal warmth is stirred:

Innocent is her touch as the dawn's, but still it unleashes The ravisher shades of envy. Freedom is more than a word.'

The Nabara by Cecil Day-Lewis ●

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Spanish Revolution and Civil War Background

Pistoleros shoot trade unionists and peasants starve

by Brian Bamford: Secretary of Bury Branch of *Unite the Union* ;
 with additional research by Barry Woodling

THE 20TH Century opened with a 'hunger pact' or lockout of trade union activists by the bosses in Barcelona in 1901. Spain's industrial revolution was based in Barcelona in Catalonia and Bilbao in the Basque country. At that time Barcelona was the most important centre of the cotton industry outside Manchester and Lancashire. Catalonia had by 1930 also developed light industry, machine shops and shipping.

When, in April 2005, the Manchester electricians spoke at a union meeting of blacklisting in the local building trade, a Catalan speaker, invited by *Tameside Trade Union Council*, told me of 'el pacto de hambre' (lockout or hunger pact) that was used in the old days against trade union militants in Barcelona.

In 1902 a General Strike was launched against the Barcelona bosses to increase pay. The Government in Madrid then declared martial law and 371 labour activists were jailed and fighting between pickets and the army left 17 dead and 44 injured. The use of the army on the streets of Barcelona as a policeman, combined with the conscripting of young men to fight disastrous wars in Spanish Morocco, created an anti-military spirit among the workers of Barcelona. In July 1909, what started as a peaceful general strike by the unions against the war in Morocco ended in what was called the 'Tragic Week'.

This was provoked by a decision by the War Office to call up reserves from Catalonia. Ever since the disastrous war in Cuba led to the return of thousands of starving malaria-ridden troops to Barcelona, the people had been anti-war. As the troops left for Morocco there were sad scenes at the station and next day riots broke out across the city. The regime responded by shooting 175 workingmen and in the executions that followed, Francisco Ferrer, the famous founder of the *Escuela Moderna* in Barcelona, was shot. Public reaction brought down the Maura government.

These events, and the failed general strikes of 1901 and 1909, led to the foundation, in 1911, of the *National Confederation of Labour (CNT)*. The Socialist Party had



Spanish Peasant Woman

founded the *General Union of Labour (UGT)* in 1888 in Barcelona, but owing to lack of support it had moved its headquarters to Madrid in 1899.

Then began a trial of strength between the *CNT* and the local employers and Madrid Government which was to go on till the Civil War in 1936. Because of its resistance to the Moroccan War the *CNT* did not regain its right to legal existence until 1914. Across Spain there were local general strikes and an insurrection by workers in the province of Valencia.

In Barcelona in 1918, the *Employers' Federation*, fearing the growth of trade union activity after the First World War,

planned a lockout, hired pistoleros (gunmen) to shoot leading trade unionists and tried to stir up trouble to provoke the workers. The *Sindicatos Libres* (Scab unions) in 1920 were taken under the protection of the new Civil Governor of Barcelona, Martínez Anido, its affiliated gunmen armed, and set to rival the *Sindicatos (Unions)* of the *CNT*. The bosses began sacking *CNT* members and replacing them with members of the scab *Sindicatos Libres*. Anido is said to have had a list of 675 trade unionists in Barcelona who, he declared, should be shot on sight.

For five dismal years the killings went on, till in March 1923 the leader of the *CNT*, Salvador Seguí, was gunned down in a street in Barcelona. After this murder, the Cardinal Archbishop of Saragossa was shot in revenge. The Archbishop was one of those behind the terror against the unions. Gerald Brenan (1943) says of this carnage in Spain:

'the Church, the Army, the employers, the landowners, the State itself have all at different times, whenever their interests have appeared to them to be jeopardized, put their hands without scruple to actions of this sort. If therefore I have devoted so much space to these five sordid years in Barcelona, it is because they can be regarded as a sort of rehearsal for the recent infinitely more destructive and tragic civil war.' ●

Rural Spain in Crisis by Brian Bamford

In his classic book *The Spanish Labyrinth: an account of the Social and Political Background of the Spanish Civil War* (1943) Gerald Brenan wrote:

'Under all the unrest and revolutionary action of the last hundred years lies the agrarian question. Reactionary farmers in Navarre (Carlists), peasants with a grievance in Catalonia (rabassaires), insurrectionary day labourers in Andalusia (anarchists), revolutionary peasant farmers and labourers on the Central tableland and in Extremadura (socialists) — all have made their contribution to the witches' cauldron.' Without a solution to the problems of the workers on the land Mr Brenan writes: *'...there could be no hope of peaceful life or development for Spain.'*

WE KNOW that the *Daf* electricians in dispute in Manchester suffered abuse, intimidation and blacklisting. We know in London, the Gate Gourmet workers were set-up by their own employers to avoid paying redundancy pay. But though they may have been manhandled by the police or courts they didn't have to face a hail of bullets when they came home from a strike meeting or picket. What happened in Spain and Catalonia makes Manchester's *Peterloo* look like a picnic.

Despite the bullets of the bosses' gunmen the *Confederación* (anarcho-sindicalist CNT) had 500,000 members by 1919. An alarmed Government was already using internment without trial against trade union militants. In January 1919 the management of the Canadian-controlled electrical power company in Barcelona cut some workers' wages without notice. Then when eight office workers complained, the firm sacked them, they appealed to the Confederation for support and the CNT replied by calling out the power workers in solidarity on 4th, February. The strike went from a sit-in solidarity strike by workers at the *Energia Electrica de Cataluña* to a city-wide general strike by the 21st, February with textile workers on the streets and most factories paralysed. This left Barcelona as a city without electricity and the authorities declared a state of siege, calling out the army to take over the power supply and arresting up to 4,000 trade unionists. In the middle of March the bosses caved-in and reinstated the sacked workers, paying part of their lost wages. The Government released some imprisoned trade unionists and introduced a 8-hour-day: thus Spain became the first country in Europe to bring in the 8-hour-day and Barcelona became possibly the most unionised city in the world.

As the industrial workers in Barcelona and Catalonia were fighting for trade union rights and emancipation, in Andalusia in southern Spain, there had been a famine in 1905. A federation of peasants and farm labourers—the *F. N.A.E.*—was founded at Cordova in 1913. In 1917 the movement took off, not just in Andalusia, but in Levante in the East of Spain and later that year the *F.N.A.E.* went national and joined the CNT. The policy of these new farm unions was not just wage increases, but abolition of piece-work and the cultivation of land in common—collectives. This business of not having the land cultivated in common and collectivised was where the new republic failed most visibly, when the moderate republicans came to power in 1931.

After the victory of the republican parties in the elections of 1931, a *Law of Agrarian Reform* began its passage in September 1932. The success or failure of the Republic depended on its ability to put through Land Reform that would satisfy the working classes and give the regime the stability it needed. The problem for the Republican government was the world crisis and slump in agricultural prices. The resulting unemployment in Spain reached a previously unknown level as land went out of cultivation. The land workers of southern Spain were not impressed. Having expected the big estates would be broken up into collectives, they were disappointed when it became clear this was not going to happen. In April 1932 the Labour Minister, the Socialist Largo Caballero, imposed compulsory arbitration which was a camouflaged ban on the right to strike.

Largo Caballero had been head of the other big union federation - the *General Labour Union (UGT)* - it was an ordinary trade union confederation like the British *TUC* without any immediate revolutionary aims. It was smaller than the CNT, but it was strong in the mining and steel-producing areas of the Asturias and Bilbao.

The failure of the Republic to form collectives to cultivate the land in common so that the difficult dry terrain of the south, east and central Spain could be irrigated through investment, was something which came back to haunt it. In the small Andalusian town of Casas Viejas the peasants belonged to the CNT. On 8th, January 1933 a small anarchist rebellion took place in Barcelona, but the planned general strike to accompany it down in Andalusia did not take place. I lived and worked in Spain in the 1960s and it was difficult to get news on events in different parts of the country then, one can easily imagine how hard it was in the 1930s particularly in the countryside. The peasants of Casas Viejas mistakenly believed a revolution had occurred in the rest of Spain and took over their town hall. The Republican Government over-reacted and the civil guard killed 25 villagers. Raymond Carr says: *'It was the long-term effects of Casas Viejas that destroyed Azañas government in September 1933...the Republic was presented as other governments of the past—corrupt, incapable of preserving public order, yet violent.'* Elections in November 1933 led to a big defeat for the Left. The Right won a landslide victory up from 42 to 207 seats in the *Cortes* (parliament) in Madrid. ●

Civil War Setting: July 1936

by Brian Bamford: Secretary of Tameside TUC in his personal capacity

'Everything was rotten in Spain except the hearts of the poorer people.'
Napier, *History of the Peninsular War.*

'The deepest tragedy for the intelligentsia involved in the Spanish struggle was that truths and lies were inextricably entangled, that the deceivers were also deceived.'
'It has been said that those who fought and died in Spain, with the bloom of their illusions untouched, were the lucky ones.'

Julian Simmons,
The Thirties: A Dream Revolved

'...then begins a bothersome and exhilarating second need, to go beyond himself and take on the otherness of the world in works that remain his own yet offer rights of way to everybody else... What poets do is to encourage our inclination to credit the prompting of our intuitive being. They help us to say in the recesses of ourselves... "Yes, I know something like that, too. Yes, that's right. Thank you for putting words on it and making it more or less official!"

Seamus Heaney, *The Government of the Tongue* (1988)

THE RIGHT-WING GOVERNMENT lasted two years from November 1933 to February 1936. From February 1936 up to the revolt of the generals in July 1936, Spain was ruled by a pure republican government without socialist participation.

On July 17th, 1936, the Spanish Legion spearheaded an attack in Spanish Morocco. The slaughter of workers and well known leftists began immediately. On July 18th, 1936 Seville was seized by the army and later that day Spain's Republican Government of Casares Quiroga resigned.

On July 19th the CNT trade union daily *Solidaridad Obrera* came out, disfigured by the Censor, with a headline entitled *'Down with fascism'* and reading: *'Comrades we must be thorough in our action. The people must rise en masse like a single man to bar the way to fascism. In the face of the insolence of reactionary forces: death to fascism.'* All of this was completely blotted-out by the Censor, but the following CNT regional communiqué went in:

'CNT of Catalonia! People of Catalonia! Be vigilant and on a war footing! The time has come to act and be constructive. Months and months we have spent criticising fascism, pointing out its shortcomings and issuing hard and fast watchwords to the effect that the people must rise up in arms when Spain's black reaction tries to foist its loathsome dictatorship upon us. That moment has arrived, people of Catalonia... We,

the authentic representatives of the CNT in Catalonia...cannot hesitate in these grave times, in these times of action. The CNT instructs all to back the revolutionary general strike the very instant anyone revolts, while at national level the guidelines of the national committee are to be abided by... In Seville, fascism has assumed control of the situation. There is a mutiny in Cordoba. North Africa is under their control. We, the people of Catalonia, let us be on a war footing and ready to act. Be valiant! Arm yourselves and do battle. Long live the CNT! Long live libertarian communism! Launch the revolutionary general strike against fascism'

The Regional CNT Committee.

That very day July 19th, 1936, a part of the Barcelona garrison left its barracks and occupied key points in the city and took over some buildings such as the *Hotel Ritz* and telephone exchange. Troops from the Atarazanas and La Maestranza barracks took over the port district and some officers loyal to the Government were imprisoned. This was the position early hours on the Sunday morning.

The first clash took place near the CNT premises of the *Woodworkers' Union* where a barricade had been put up across the *Paral.lel Avenue* where the workers kept the troops at bay for four hours. The military then used old men, children and women as human shields to destroy the union premises. At noon the CNT began a counter attack on the enemy's rear and regained the union office. In the city centre CNT workers from Barceloneta and security forces challenged other rebel soldiers from the dockyard area and Sant Andreu barracks, who had come with reinforcements. CNT historian, José Peirats says the armed resistance of trade unionists in *'hand-to-hand fighting'* broke the morale and *'military discipline'* of these troops who began to break off hostilities with the workers and turn their guns on their own officers. The Secretary of the *Metal Workers' Union*, Tejedor Delgado recalls ▶▶▶

►► the attack on the Atarazanas barracks:

'On July 20th comrade Durruti shouted to everyone: "Forward the men of the CNT!" So began the epic attack which overshadowed the capture of the Bastille by the people of Paris. As the tremendous struggle continued hour upon hour, a boy appeared not more than 12-years-old. Amid a hail of gunfire, he...came and went, ferrying ammunition to the fighters.

When the last shot had been fired this Barcelona urchin vanished from our side.'

Events in Barcelona in Catalonia, were repeated in the Basque region, the Asturias and Madrid, as trade unionists seized guns and took to the streets. Valencia had a stand-off for a few days while the troops made up their minds. In the navy, though the top brass backed the

rebellion, the crews knew better than the soldiers how to organise themselves to oppose their officers. The crew of the destroyer *Churruca*, that took the African troops to Cadiz on July 19th, rose on the 20th and shot their officers. Everywhere Sailors Committees were in control and the sailors were taking over from their officers.

In Andalusia in the South, historic home of Spanish anarchism, and in Galicia in the North, the trade unionists had no weapons and could not offer serious resistance. In Malaga, the Civil Guard colonel, unusually was arrested by his own officers, and they and the Assault Guard resisted the army when it rebelled. Then the CNT/UGT workers set fire to the army barracks and the garrison gave up. In the capital of another Andalusian province, Jaén, the Civil Governor disarmed the Civil Guard and gave their guns to the CNT and UGT trade unions. Thus, the city was saved. Antony Beevor writes: 'Obviously many more towns would have been saved if



Madrid trade unionists of the socialist UGT and anarchist CNT leave for front

such a course had been followed...'. The Spanish Civil War began on the day of the Feria (Fair) in La Linea in Cadiz, as on July 18th, 1936 troops from Morocco started landing across the Bay of Gibraltar near to Algeciras. Because of this the frontier town of La Linea was full of Gibraltarians, who on learning of the military rising by Spanish army

Generals, fled back across the border into the British Colony of Gibraltar. Some Gibraltarians normally resident in Spain and about 4,000 Spaniards joined them in their flight. When the Republican government tried to retake naval control of the Straits of Gibraltar dividing Spain from Morocco on 21, July 1936 with a naval force including the battleship *Jaime I* the acting governor, Brigadier W. T. Brook, ordered the Spanish gov-

ernment ships to leave Gibraltar waters. It seems that the Brigadier did this on learning that the crew on the *Jaime I*, loyal to their Republican government, had taken over their ship and either arrested or killed some disloyal officers. Of the Royal Navy in Gibraltar, Antony Beevor writes: 'The Invergordon mutiny of 1931...was fresh in their memories...' and the actions of the Spanish crews 'sent shudders down their spines'.

British sympathies seemed to lie with Franco and Sir Peter Chambers-Mitchell who visited Gibraltar during the Civil War claimed it was a Francoist base. Harold Nicolson, a Conservative, said 'the propertied classes in this country (Britain) with their insane pro-Franco business have placed us in a very dangerous position.' He further agreed that 'the second German war began in July 1936, when the Germans started their intervention in Spain'. Thus the British State put class interest before the national interest. ●

Manchester Volunteers for Spain

Who were they and why did they go?

by Brian Bamford (Editor)

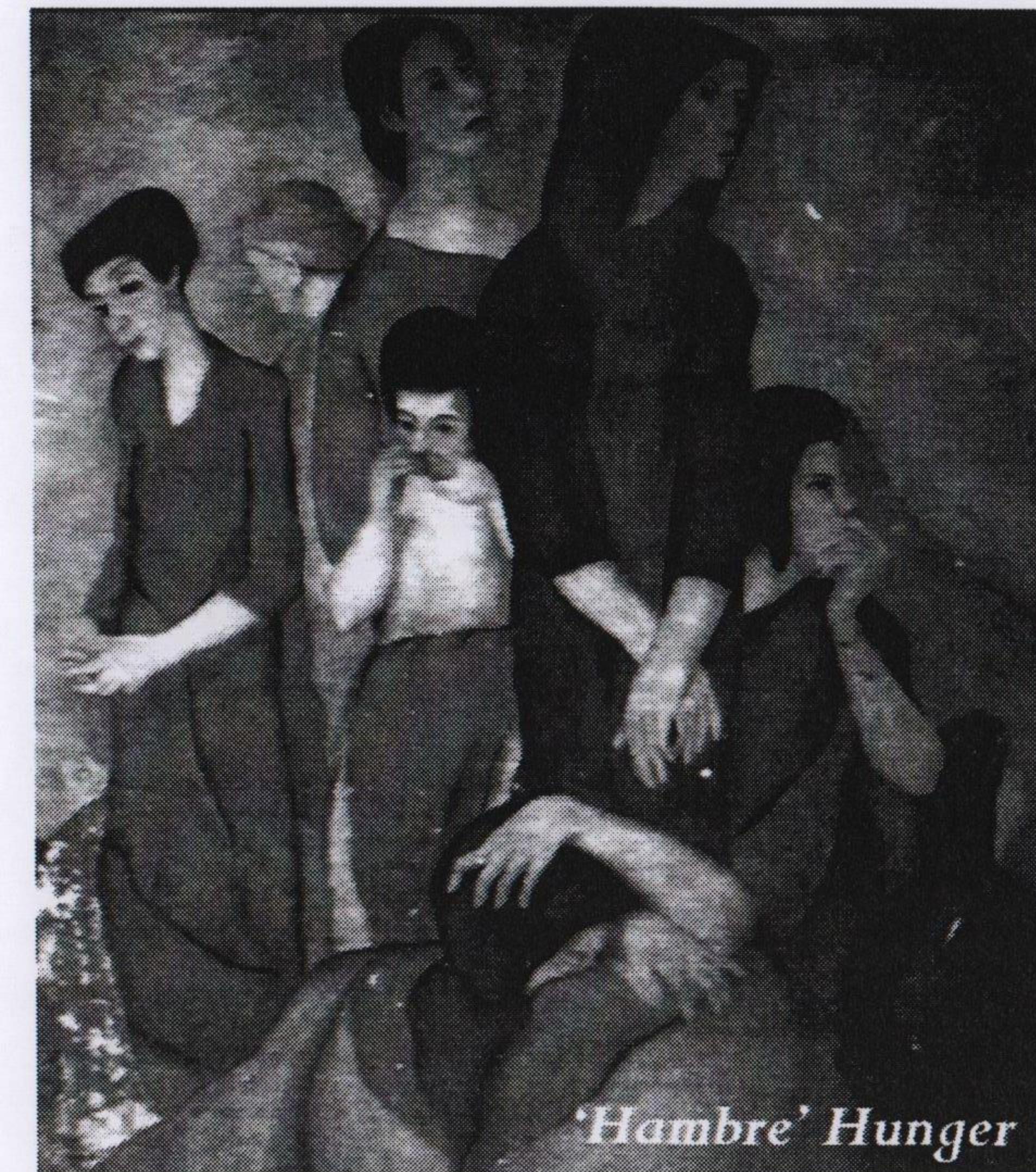
IN 2006—the 70th anniversary of the start of the Spanish Civil War—the Families of the Victims of Franco asked that it be dedicated as a year of homage to all the victims of Franco. On April 1st, 1939 this war was declared over by General Franco, but the slaughter of former supporters of the Spanish Republic continued until the early 1970s.

In Spain the first victims of General Franco occurred in October 1934, when a rebellion began in the Asturias following a National General Strike called by the Socialist trade union federation - the UGT. Anthony Beevor in *The Battle for Spain* writes: 'The Asturias revolution had lasted no more than two weeks, but cost around 1,000 lives.' He adds: 'Thousands of workers were sacked for having taken part in the rising and several thousand were imprisoned...Responsibility for the appalling brutality of the security forces lay more with their commanders, especially Yagüe and Franco, than the politicians in Madrid.'

With the rising of the Generals on July 1936 there were to be more victims, many more. Jack Jones, former General Secretary of the Transport & General Workers' Union and President of the International Brigade Memorial Trust, says: 'When Spaniards rose up to resist General Franco's military rebellion, it was an inspiration to millions of people across the world.'

While Antony Beevor claims '5,000 foreigners served outside (the International Brigades), mostly attached to the CNT or the POUM', Richard Baxell author of *'British Volunteers in Spain'* says most estimates reckon 'over 35,000 people from perhaps 53 nations left their homes to join the Republican forces.' Of these, Baxell claims, over 2,300 were British. Though most of these were recruited to the International Brigade Baxell says: 'Most members of the ILP (Independent Labour Party) fought either with the Anarchist militias or with the Partido Obrero de Unificación Marxista (POUM), such as George Orwell..., who was refused entry to the International Brigade being "politically suspect", and Bob Smillie, who died, probably of appendicitis, in a Republican jail in Valencia in June 1937.'

Richard Baxell estimates volunteers from the north-west of England 'numbered approximately 370'. Most of these came from Manchester, Oldham and Liverpool. Hugh Thomas in his book *'The Spanish Civil War'* says 'over 80% were working class, many were unemployed and over 60% were communists.' Baxell claims: 'The



'Hambre' Hunger

'Well, to me it was elementary. Here was fascism spreading all over the world, the rape of Abyssinia, the rise of fascism in Germany and the persecution of the Jews there and the rise of the Blackshirts in Britain with their anti-Semitism, and especially their anti-Irishism. I felt that somebody had to do something to try and stop it.'

Sam Wild, Manchester leader of the British Battalion

level of trade union membership supports Bill Alexander's remark that '[a] high rate of trade-union membership was not untypical'. Many of their jobs were manual working class: bricklayers, metal and engineering workers, miners, electricians, labourers and painters.

Why did they go?

Well before the military rising in Spanish Africa civilian agents of the plot of the Generals against the Spanish republic hired a *de Havillan Dragon Rapid* in London with the money of the banker Juan March. The plane was used to take General Franco to Tetuan to join the Spanish army of Africa. As the rising first occurred on July 18th, 1936 in Spanish Morocco, Anthony Beevor says: 'The hesitancy of

the republican government was fatal in a rapidly developing crisis...The prime minister did not dare arm the UGT and CNT (trade unions). On the 18th, July the CNT and UGT declared a General Strike against the military rebellion. Towns such as Jaén where the civil governor distributed arms to the CNT and UGT were secured.'

Richard Baxell writes: 'In Spain, for the first time in continental Europe, the "fascists" were not having it all their own way.' At the start of the civil war Baxell says: 'the two sides were relatively balanced and there seemed a genuine chance that, at last, the seemingly irrevocable advance of fascism might be held back.' As Sam Wild says

above: 'Here was fascism spreading all over the world, the rape of Abyssinia, the rise of fascism in Germany and the persecution of the Jews there...' AJP Taylor observed: 'What men believed at the time was more important than what was actually happening.' Most of the British volunteers saw the Spanish war as a war against fascism and Spain as merely a battleground in this international conflict. The *News Chronicle* stressed the international aspect of the war and gave the *International Brigades* sympathetic coverage. Leslie Preger from Salford explains his decision to go: 'I saw an account in the *News Chronicle* of a trade union meeting which set up a Medical Aid Committee and an appealed for lorry drivers and Spanish speaking people. So I hared off to London to volunteer and was accepted.' Albert Charlesworth, a metal polisher from Oldham, Greater Manchester declared: 'I was, and still am, inclined to side with any little party where I think any injustice is being ►►►



Poster of collectivised public transport services which were under CNT control in Barcelona

done, and this, I think, is what took me to Spain...' Others, like Manchester volunteer Maurice Levine from Cheetham, joined-up because their friends were going: 'One of the prime factors in me making an application to go to Spain was that Eddie Swindells, a glass worker friend of mine, was very friendly with Arnold Jeans (from Manchester) who had already gone to Spain with Clem Beckett.'

Levine worked for the Manchester clothing manufacturers Marshall & Crosslands with Julius 'Jud' Coleman. Levine and Coleman travelled to Spain with Ralph Cantor (formerly Cantorovitch) from Manchester (see Ralph Cantor's journal below), George Westfield (Cheetham), Bill Benson (Eccles) and Eddie Swindells (Salford). Of Maurice Stott from Rochdale who died in Spain George Brown says: 'Maurice Stott was... a sound confident man, who didn't hesitate for business reasons to come out and take the greatest personal risks in the battle against a foul autocracy.' Others like Joe Norman, a Communist Party Organiser with the British Battalion, had been involved in many earlier protests in the North of England such as the mass trespass in 1932 and the Unemployed Workers' Movement. Joe Norman said: 'My first real experience of political activity was the mass trespass on Kinderscout in Derbyshire which eventually led to the designation of the area as a National Park. Dozens of those that fought the police and landowners on that trespass were later to fight and die in Spain—men like Clem Beckett

(from Oldham) and George Brown.' Joe Norman, who was an amateur boxer, was imprisoned in Spain (see Dave Chapple's comments on inside back cover). Since our 1st edition in South West England trade unionist Dave Chapple has been interviewing a nurse who served in the Spanish Civil War and in Lancashire relatives of International Brigade volunteer James Keogh, killed in March 1938, are in touch with Tameside TUC and have been seeking to find his grave in northern Spain. Tameside TUC is now seeking blue plaques for both James Keogh and Joe Fillingham, formally of Bury TUC, who died in the defence of Teruel.

A telling admission is made by André Marty, the International Brigades' Controller and chief communist Comintern representative in Spain, he said that he had ordered the shooting of 500 International Brigade volunteers. This was, says Anthony Beevor: 'nearly one-tenth of the total killed in the war...' A shadow hangs over this Spanish war and it is not helped by the attitude of communists who are often anxious to cover up the truth and even tried to prevent the publication of this commemorative booklet. Dave Chapple, in his Afterword, says the 'Spanish Civil War deserves a decent debate'. But some still think ignorance is bliss. ●

Manchester's Spanish Civil War Volunteers

This list of volunteers was originally compiled by Christopher J. Carson on behalf of *Eccles & District History Society* with the help of Ruth and Eddie Frow, founders of the *Working Class History Library*, has now been edited based on information in Richard Baxell's book *British Volunteers in the Spanish Civil War* (2004) and further material compiled by Jim Carmody and Richard Baxell since 2004 [some further alterations added based on Bernard Barry's book *From Manchester to Spain* (2009)]. Many on the list were in the *Communist Party* and the *Young Communist League* as both these organisations, together with the *Independent Labour Party*, openly supported intervention on the side of the young Spanish democracy. Both the *Labour Party* and the *Trade Union Congress* opposed intervention on behalf of the recently elected *Spanish Republican Government*. Yet, as you will see, several members of the *Labour Party*, such as Salford lad Michael Goodison—a *Transport & General Workers' Union* member—described as a 'syndicalist', fought with *International Brigade*. Arnold Jeans was a member of the *Socialist Party of Great Britain* and is distinguished in being one of the first British volunteers to arrive in Spain and one of the first to die, his efforts seem to have influenced others such as Eddie Swindells and Maurice Levine. Walter Sproston and Arthur Clinton, both from Swinton, were members of the *Independent Labour Party*. Clinton was one of about thirty Englishmen who fought with the *POUM* militia which was portrayed in the Ken Loach Spanish Civil War film *Land and Freedom*. Arthur Clinton stands out because he fought with George Orwell and was mentioned in Orwell's book *Homage to Catalonia*: 'The English had got into the habit of saying that this wasn't a war, it was a bloody pantomime. We were hardly under direct fire from the Fascists. The only danger was from stray bullets... All the casualties at this time was from strays. Arthur Clinton got a mysterious bullet that smashed his left shoulder and disabled his arm, permanently, I am afraid.'

Unless otherwise stated, these men fought with the *International Brigades*, but in 1936 some may have served with either the *Anarchist* or *POUM* militias before being transferred to the *Brigades*:

Armstrong, Alex: Manchester: *Young Communist*. Took part in *Mass Trespas* at Kinderscout in 1932. Killed at Jarama in 1937.
Booth, Syd: Beswick, Manchester: Secretary of *Greater Manchester Trade Union Spanish Solidarity Committee*.
Barker, Steve: Colyhurst: see Bernard Barry's new book.
Brown, George: Plating, Manchester: Secretary of *Manchester Communist Party Branch*. Political commissar in Spain. Killed at Villanueva de la Cañada in July 1937.
Brown, Michael: Harperhey, Manchester: Brother of George Brown above. Deserted in December 1936, declaring: 'this isn't a war, this is bloody madness. I've had enough.'
Byrom, Hugh: Manchester: Killed in action—see Barry [2009].
Cantor, Ralph: Cheetham: *Jewish Lads' Brigade*. *Young Communist League*. Took part in *Mass Trespas* in 1932. Interpreter and machine gunner in Spain. Killed at Brunete in 1937.
Coleman, Jud: Cheetham, Manchester: *Manchester Young Communist League*. Said of the attempt to break the stalemate at Jarama 1937: 'Most of the attacks were almost suicidal, because there's no way you can send men against machine guns without losing some.'
Fanning, Tommy: Hulme: *Communist Party* and *National Unemployed Workers' Movement*. Lost a leg at Jarama in 1937.
Goldman, Benny: Cheetham, Manchester: Survived war.
Goodman, Benny: Cheetham: Born 1918. Motor mechanic. Member of *Jewish Lads' Brigade*. Captured by General Franco's Nationalists in Spain but escaped. Worked in cookhouse while in the *International Brigades*, but was eventually sent home for being underage.
Green, Maurice: Cheetham: Killed—see Bernard Barry.
Jordan, Lawrence: Miles Plating, Collyhurst or Rochdale?: see 'From Manchester to Spain' [2009] by Bernard Barry and *Brigadas Internacionales* by Antonio Diez. Died at Brunete 1937.
Kenny, Patrick: Anglo-Irish from Manchester. *National Unemployed Workers' Movement* and *Young Communist League*.
Killick, Fred: Manchester: *Young Communist League* Committee Member. Killed Jarama in 1937.
Levine, Maurice: Cheetham or Altringham (see Bernard Barry): *Communist Party* member. Took part in *Mass Trespas*. Fought at Cordoba, Jarama and wounded at Brunete. Political commissar and 'a sort of welfare officer...' in the *International Brigades*.
McKenna, Bernard: Hulme: Member of the *Young Communist*

League. He served in Spain from February 1937 till October 1938. Was at battles of Brunete, Quinto Fuentes de Ebro, Teruel and retreat on the Aragon front. Was twice wounded, and was taken prisoner with Joe Norman in March 1938.
Maskey, Bert: Cheetham: Barber. *National Unemployed Workers' Movement*. Killed Jarama 1937.
Moor, Thomas: Miles Plating: *Young Communist League*. Killed Teruel 1938.
Morgan, Charles: Moss Side: Wounded and returned home in 1937 after a 'disastrous attack' on 27th, February at Jarama.
Parkes, Albert: Hulme, Manchester: Killed Brunete in 1937.
Porter, Arthur: Rusholme: Sheet metal worker who worked for the Co-op. Killed Jarama 1937.
Rosenfield, Monty: Cheetham: Went to Spain aged 19 and fought with the *International Brigade*.
Shammah, Victor: Didsbury: Secretary of *Young Communist League* and local trade unionist. Killed Belchite in 1938.
Silvert, Sidney: Cheetham: Member of the *Communist Party* and friend of Ralph Cantor who returned home and later became critic of the *Communist Party*. Seen as a 'Black Sheep' by the *Communist Party* (see Antonio Diez: 'Brigadas Internacionales').
Ward, Robert: Moss Side: *Young Communist League* and *National Unemployed Workers' Movement*. Sheet metal worker. Died 14th, June 1937 in *Colmenar Hospital* (see Ralph Cantor's journal).
Westfield, George: Cheetham: *Young Communist League*. Killed Belchite 1938.
Whitehead, Frank: Wythenshawe: *Labour Party* member. Killed Jarama 1937.
Wild, Sam: Ardwick: Served in the navy. Became Battalion Commander when Bill Alexander was wounded (see Dolores Long's account of her father).
Wilkinson, Norman: Miles Plating: *Young Communist League* & *National Unemployed Workers' Movement* member. Killed Jarama 1937.
Wilson, Kenneth J.: Manchester: Killed in action (see Barry).

Salford's Spanish War Volunteers

Banks, William: Eccles (Patricroft: see Bernard Barry): *Communist Party* and *Amalgamated Engineering Union (AEU)* member. Worked at Gardeners Ltd., Eccles. Killed at Ebro in 1938.

Benson, William: 1911-1968: Eccles (Stretford: see Barry): Electrician and member of the *Electrical Trade Union*. Chairman of *National Unemployed Workers' Movement* and participated in Mass Trespass in 1932. Stood as *Labour* Candidate for Eccles Borough Council.

Boden, Karl: Salford: See Barry: 'From Manchester to Spain'.

Brooks, Fred: Salford: See Bernard Barry.

Brown, Frank: Salford (Preswich: see Barry): *Salford Labour League of Youth*. *National Unemployed Workers' Movement*. Killed at Ebro 1938.

Clinton, Arthur: Swinton: *Independent Labour Party*, *National Unemployed Workers' Movement*. Fought with George Orwell in the *POUM (Marxist Workers' Party)* in Catalonia: wounded in action.

Fink, Sydney: Broughton, Salford: Born 1917. Lived in Fenny Street and attended Waterloo Road School. Member of *Workers' Arts Club*. Killed Belchite in 1938.

Goodison, Michael: Salford: Worked as a docker and although he was a *Labour Party* member has been described as a 'Syndicalist'. He was a member of the *Transport & General Workers' Union*. Killed at Ebro in 1938.

Goodman, W. Robert: Salford: Engraver. Member of *Young Communist League* and *Workers' Support Federation*. Involved in *Mass Trespass* in 1932. Killed at Jarama in 1937.

Greenhalgh, Walter: Wounded in neck in an attempt to retake the Madrid-Corunna road on 15th, January 1937.

Jeans, Arnold: Salford (or Rusholme? see Bernard Barry): Of Russian origins. Member of the *Socialist Party of Great Britain*.

One of the first British fighters to arrive in Spain. He fought and led a small group in the *Thaelman Battalion* and as he knew six languages he acted as an interpreter. Killed in November 1936.

Grimshaw, Peter: Salford: See Barry 'From Manchester to Spain'.

McGinley, W.L.: Salford. Leader of *National Unemployed Workers' Movement* and member of *Communist Party*.

Morton, Sydney: Salford: See Bernard Barry.

Murphy, Molly: Salford: Nurse—see Bernard Barry.

Newbury, Fred: Salford. Born 1900 on Whit Lane. Builder and property repairer. *Labour Party* member. Killed Jarama in 1937. (see *Obituary in Salford City Reporter*: 19th, March 1937)

Norman, Joe: Salford. Attended *Ordsall Board School*. Engineer and active trade unionist. *Lancashire District Committee of the Communist Party*. Amateur boxer. Captured in Spain and spent time in captivity. (See *Salford City Reporter*: 8th, July 1938 and 4th, November 1938)

Preger, Leslie: Salford. He was influenced by a friend who had been at the *Workers' Olympiad* in Barcelona when the war broke out. The *Barcelona Workers' Olympiad* was the 'socialist riposte to the Berlin Olympics'. Preger said of a mate of his who came from Manchester: 'He came back towards the end of July full of stories about the uprising and brought back cartridge cases, flags, and the rest of it.' Preger later rejected the *Communist Party* saying: 'I just drifted away, especially because of their attitude to the *Poumists* and anarchists.'

Skerrington, C: Salford. See Barry's 'From Manchester to Spain'.

Sproston, Walter: Swinton: Engineer and *Independent Labour Party* member. Killed Belchite in 1937.

Swindells, Eddie: Pendlebury (or Rusholme see Barry): *Workers' Arts Club* and *Communist Party* member in Salford. Craftsman in glass. Killed Jarama in 1937.

The Oldham, Rochdale, Tameside, Bury, Bolton and Stockport Lads

OLDHAM:

Armitage, Charles: Oldham: See Barry *From Manchester to Spain* [2009].

Beckett, Clem: Oldham: Joined the *Communist Party*. Speedway rider known as the 'Red Devil' and invented the *Wall of Death*. Killed at Jarama in 1937.

Bradbury, Ken: Oldham. Founder of *Oldham Young Communist League*. Killed at Teruel in 1938.

Charlesworth, Arthur: Oldham: A metal polisher. Sent home for being under age, returned later to join *International Brigade* and fought against the Moors at 'Suicide Hill', Jarama in February 1937: 'There weren't many to go back...', he said.

Jackson, William: Oldham: Killed at Gandesa in April 1938.

Lees, Joseph: Oldham. Secretary of local *Labour Party*. Played tenor horn in *Oldham Territorial Band*. Killed at Brunete in 1937.

Rawson 'Heap', Harry: Oldham: Killed Cordova in 1936

Shaw, Frank: Oldham: See Barry's 'From Manchester to Spain'.

Wolstencroft, Clifford: Oldham: Killed Belchite March 1938.

ROCHDALE:

Ferguson, Alex: Smallbridge, Rochdale. Survived the Spanish Civil War and lived at Spring Bank in Smallbridge where he worked as a caretaker. He died a few years ago.

Stott, Maurice: Smallbridge. Killed at Jarama in February 1937. No obituary found in the *Rochdale Observer* at the time. He

was a friend of George Brown, who was a political commissar in the *International Brigade* in Spain.

TAMESIDE:

Keogh, James: Ashton-under-Lyne: Died at Calaceite in March 1938. No obituary found in the *Ashton Reporter*.

BURY:

Fillingham, Joe: Bury: Member of *Bury Trades Council* executive committee, *General & Municipal Workers' Union*, and *Communist Party*, and often wrote letters to the *Bury Times* on the Spanish Civil War. Went to Spain in August 1937, served in Major Attlee company and was made Sergeant December 1937. Killed Teruel: 20th, January 1938. See *Bury Times* and *Daily Worker* for tributes and obituaries at the time.

BOLTON:

Alwyn, James: Bolton: Died at Jarama in February 1937.

SALE:

Foxall, Charles: Sale: Killed in action—see Barry.

STOCKPORT:

Broncou, Willy: Stockport: See Barry.

Brown, William: Stockport: Killed Jarama in February 1937. ●

SAM WILD: ARDWICK VOLUNTEER

by his daughter Dolores Long of the International Brigade Memorial Trust

SAM WILD was born in Ardwick in 1908. His mother died when he was 2 year-old, and he was brought up by his dad, a fitter and turner, who worked in Gorton. His mother had been an Irish immigrant and he was aware of the struggles of the Irish people for independence, often, going to Stevenson's Square to listen to speakers calling for *Home Rule* for Ireland. Life was hard and unstable, and Sam left school at 14. At this time his father was unemployed, his brother in an orphanage, his sister was in Service. Thus Sam decided to join the navy; he did so not out of enthusiasm for a life at sea, but because it was a secure job that provided accommodation and food.

The navy was the start of Sam Wild's political education. He saw appalling poverty in some of the countries he visited. He realised that the officers in the navy saw themselves as superior to foreigners and to the lower ranks within the navy. He hated the rigid class system that existed on the ship. He read widely and finding it impossible to tolerate the navy with its outdated attitudes and values he deserted.

Returning to Manchester and unemployment he became involved in the *Unemployed Workers' Movement*. It was through attending meetings that he became aware of the struggle in Spain. With his friend Bert Maskey he left for Spain in November 1936, reaching Albacete on December

29th, 1936. Sam was involved in many of the major battles, leading with 'conspicuous wisdom and courage' and when Bill Alexander was wounded Sam was promoted to *Battalion Commander* (Bill Alexander suffered a shoulder wound on the 16th, February 1938 during a night attack on Segura de Baños).

On 25th, July 1938 the Republican army took the offensive. They crossed the Ebro and advance rapidly. Sam's battalion fought with such gallantry and courage that they earned the title of the 'Shock Brigade'. Under his leadership the battalion took part in the famous defence of Hill 666 in the Sierra Pandols. Although wounded in his right hand, Sam refused to leave the front line and carried on fighting. He was awarded the Spanish Medal of Valour for his leadership and gallantry, and was mentioned in despatches for 'His untiring energy, efficiency and sangfroid, giving an example of bravery to the whole battalion.'

In a speech on leaving Spain, Sam said: 'The British Battalion is



Grenade-throwers of the Durruti column

prepared to carry on the work begun here to ensure that our five hundred comrades who sleep forever beneath the Spanish soil shall serve as an example to the entire British people in the struggle against Fascism.' In the final days the Battalion had pledged: 'We are returning to our respective countries not for celebrations in our honour, not to rest, but to continue the fight we helped to wage in Spain. We are merely changing the fronts and the weapons.' In different ways, individually and through other organisations, the great majority of the volunteers kept that pledge. ●

Memoria Historica

IN SPAIN, today, the debate over the *memoria historica* (historical memory) of the victims of Franco is very much alive among the Spanish people. Many trade unionists were executed when General Franco took power in 1939. Antony Beevor (2006) writes: 'We do not have the final figure for the Franquist terror, but recent researches in more than half the provinces of Spain indicate a minimum there of 35,000 official executions.' Thus he estimates the 'generally accepted figure of 50,000 (official executions) after the war may be low.' But if one takes the 'random killings, and those who died during the war from execution, suicide, hunger and sickness in prison, the total figure probably approaches 200,000'.

On 30th, July 2006, in the Spanish daily *El Pais*, the historian Julián Casanova said: 'The Civil War was followed by a long dictatorship and an enormous disequilibrium between the memory of the vic-

tors and the vanquished.' Señor Casanova claims: 'On the 50th anniversary of Civil War in 1986, most of the commemorations were a homage to the *International Brigades*' and avoided the political debate. He says 'in the 1990s the victims', the victims on the republican side, began to call for 'homage to the vanquished'. He also talks of 'un pacto de olvido': 'a pact of forgetfulness', because 'the left has failed to assume the struggle for human rights'.

In Spain, as a consequence of this neglect, the *Association for the Recuperation of the Historical Memory* has been set up. Yet in England, it seems, on the left and right there are those who still want to ignore the historical memory and implications of the Spanish Civil War. ●

International Brigade Volunteer

Ralph Cantor's Unpublished Diary .

RALPH CANTOR, originally Cantorvitch, from **Cheetham** arrived in Barcelona on the 1st, December 1936. He was a member of the Young Communist League and had been in the Jewish Lads Brigade. Christopher J. Carson says of Cantor 'he was one of the first Mancunians to arrive in Spain and was only 21 years old when he was killed' in July 1937. Yet Arnold Jeans, from Salford, was already dead in November 1936: killed at Boadillia del Monte. When Ralph Cantor got to Albacete two days later, capital of a poorer province inland near Valencia, that the International Brigades were using for induction of new recruits, his first duty was to attend the funeral of Hans Beimer, a well known German communist.

In 3rd, January 1937 he attended the trial of his commander De Lasalle, who he says 'proved to be receiving money from the Italians (Franco's allied enemy army)'. He adds: 'Verdict... sentence and execution within 20 minutes.' Recent writers such as Anthony Beevor now think De Lasalle was really guilty of incompetence rather than treachery. On 10th, January Ralph Cantor moved to the Madrid front and was involved in the battle there where 'Wally Greenhalgh (from Manchester) was wounded.' In the centre of Madrid on 16th, January he writes: 'Puerto del Sol heavily bombed.' He reported on 17th, January: 'Sixty Fascist planes fly over' and next day that he 'visited anarchist comrades at Hotel Europa - very friendly and hospitable especially to a Communist.'

On Sunday 24th, January 1937 he arrived again at Albacete and says 'had a royal welcome with band addressed by Andry (sic) Marty.' On Tuesday 26th, January he reports: 'Nathan now Chief of Staff of 15th Brigade'. Nathan had been a commander with the *Black & Tans*. Then on 5th, February he tells us: 'Today (I was) attached to Brigade General Headquarters Guard Company' and the next day left for the front. By 11th, February he is 'moving to Jarama on San Martin front - scene of heaviest battle of the war.' The Salford lads suffer and he reports on 15th, February: 'Swindells, Goodman and Benison (all from Salford) wounded' and that 'Killick (Manchester) reported missing.' On 22nd, February he writes: 'Sydney and Bob Ward (from Hulme) move up to front.' Robert Ward reported as dying on 14th, June 1937 in Colmenar Hospital. Ralph Cantor's entry of 28th, February says: 'Casualties include



LAS BRIGADAS INTERNACIONALES EN EL SENO DEL EJERCITO POPULAR AYUDAN A DEFENDER TUS RIQUEZAS Y TU TIERRA

As Ralph Cantor and International Brigade lads in the trenches moaned about the Commissars, the Moscow Commissars told their own tales of the International Brigade attitude to the Spaniards. Document 70 in the Moscow Archives by Colonel (Walter): 'Everyone was superior to the French, but even they were superior to the Spanish... or that 'the Spanish were "cowards".' Colonel Walter reports: 'This is just slander'. Walters says: 'The English...soldiers...were smoking "Lucky Strikes," not paying attention to the Spanish fighter standing next to them, who had spent days looking for a few shreds of tobacco...' Civilised sharing of food with others in a spirit of camaraderie is basic to Spanish culture.

countries. No selection. Drunkards, thieves, hypocrites. Glasgow, Manchester, London and France worst culprits... Stephen Spender's secretary who joined the International Brigade told Spender some of the Glasgow recruits 'turned out to be razor-slashers': 'They drank heavily, passed out, and then drank again.' (see *A World Within*).

After Professor Haldane left on 2nd, April there was a battle with '3 killed, 5 wounded', but by 4th, April a '48 hour standby order (was) given in preparation for big attack... against Italians', but he says this 'attack gives no material advantage'. Cantor's entry on 8th/9th April: 'American correspondent "New Masses" gets all information from office 6 kilometers (sic) to rear of line. Typical of all these journalists.' In this way journalists, according to Cantor, got hold of false information. Then his entry on 10th, April: 'Political Commissariat make grave errors or show favouritism in sending comrades to England...much grumbling.' Political commissars were mainly Communist Party appointees reporting back to Moscow.

The 11th, April entry reads: '...those sent out direct to big (command) positions fail. Boys (are) all conscious of this McCartney, Winterington, McDade, Kerrigan etc. Men from ranks produce best and most courageous leaders Nathan, Cunningham, Copeman, Goodfellow, Meredith etc.'

killed: Wilkinson (Miles Platting), Macky (may be 'Bert Maskey' from Cheetham), Goodman (Cheetham), Porter (Rusholme), Armstrong (Manchester), Swindells (Pendlebury), Killick (Manchester), Kenny (Manchester), Beckett (Oldham). Wounded Benson (Eccles), Barker (Greater Manchester).'

In March 1937 during a lull in the fighting Ralph Cantor reports 18th, March: 'Place appears

full of American journalists and newsreal men, same type as depicted by films' and goes on about visits by politicians like Harry Pollitt the Communist Party leader, writers such as Steven Spender and the Indian broadcaster, Anand. Of Professor Haldane Cantor writes: 'Professor J.B. Haldane stays here. Why do professors stutter? Eccentricity!' He adds on 31st, March: 'Some disgusting characters sent out from various

On 12th, April, Cantor commented: 'It appears that only workers who are free from bourgeois influence and up-bringing can really lead such sharp struggles.' His misgivings continued on 15th, April: 'News we get now totally soaked in propaganda... propaganda department both of Government and International Brigade especially overstepping the mark.' Then on 16th April: 'Political Commissars persist in treating us as children or political ignorants (sic).' His doubts about his own party propaganda doesn't stop him from 'teach(ing) Spaniards propaganda and politics' while 'win(ning) 450 pesetas gambling' from them.

Cantor's assessment on 24th, April: 'Political Commissariat of Battalion and Brigade definite failures due to inexperience...wrong approach and wrong line.' He adds: 'English Battalion Commissars succeed in provoking discontent in some decisions (sic).' On 26th, April his entry is: 'It seems as if military mistakes of a character such as in the great war must occur owing to difficult circumstances, but Political Commissariat all along fed us with lies. Political Commissars are the most disliked men in the Brigade. Spirit of men notwithstanding excellent...Some comrades suggest abolition of Political Commissars in conversation.'

By 2nd, May 1937 he is complaining about disturbing feature of the war such as 'distinctions which are too acute for justification.' For instance: 'A Sergeant receives more than double a volunteer. An officer [illegible] times as much and higher officers more. Also acute distinctions in food and accommodation.' Compare what Anthony Beevor (2006) writes: 'Probably the greatest contrast between Madrid and Barcelona was in the use of hotels. In the capital Gaylords was later taken over by the Communist Party as a luxurious billet for its senior functionaries and Russian advisers. In Barcelona the Ritz was used by the CNT and the UGT as Gastronomic Unit Number One - a public canteen for all those in need.'

On 3rd, May Cantor writes: 'Brigade newspaper almost a fashion plate weekly for the officers.' As he stands by expecting a big offensive he objects to 'further exhibition of bad organisation' and poor food 'no clean clothes, no boots after 7 days in line...Men all lousy...Conditions worse than I experience in... December. No baths.' On 9th, May he puts in an entry: 'Political Commissars ask lads to retrieve the low name of the (Communist) Party. Political leadership of our Brigade entirely CP (Communist Party).'

With a lecture by Ralph Bates, a Political Commissar, senior Communist Party official and English writer who had a good understanding of Spanish life in Andalucia, to the troops in an entry on 14th, May Ralph Cantor, it seems, has his doubts put to rest: 'Bates lectures on "Disorders in Cataloña". Speech shows that the POUM (Workers' United Marxist Party), Trotskyists and spies engineered it. Machine guns, tanks, rifles etc. in abundance and we after 3 months at front still using antiques. What is Caballero doing?'

The Political Commissar Ralph Bates' lecture had done the trick since Cantor's entry on 15th/16th, May: 'Arising out of Bates' lecture that Spain has always been the most bloody

Bernard Barry in his new book 'From Manchester to Spain' [2009] writes on Ralph Cantor: 'The diary ends in mid-June. At the battle of Brunete in July 1937 the Brigade moved to a position facing Mosquito Ridge, a strongly held fascist position, and used its Maxim machine guns to fire up the hill. While Ralph was chatting to his Cheetham YCL friend, Jud Coleman, he was hit in the neck. He was carried to lower ground but nothing could be done.'

continued ►►

and reactionary country even ignoring the inquisition. Always feuds, sects, parties and church factions...Events now show with clarity the whole trend. I am able to see a complete vision of the causes leading to the war, the building of the "Frente Poplar", the various phases of the war. If we had a united command the war would already be won.'

On 21st, May he writes: 'Ralph Bates (sic) lectures on the New Government in the trenches. UGT leaders and all CNT abstain from Government. It is clear that despite Bates denials that the Government problem is still unsettled...'

On 22nd, May: 'Very evident now Government of Caballero (Socialist/UGT) was a sort of compromise government. No offensive on the Aragon front. Failure to disarm the rearguard Battalion. Failure to build an army in Basque country—all fault of Government. Also I believe from good signs that Caballero was promised help from outside countries if he would shelve the Communists. This he accepted. Biggest failure of the old (Government) was its failure to create a new army and reserves.' On the 23rd, May: 'Anarchists provoke trouble in Catalonia. Madrid full of Tailors Generals. Automobiles needed for front. New Government seems strong enough to change this.'

On 12th, June: 'Bob Ward (Manchester) hit by mortar 3 hours before leaving line outside his blockhouse.' Then on 14th, June: 'Aitken and Williams by hard work relieve the tense political feeling. Old indignation against Old Guard (political commissars?) remains.'

Ralph Bates, assistant Political Commissar of the 15th International Brigade, clearly had a critical impact on Ralph Cantor. Bates, a British intellectual who had lived in Spain and knew Spain was not part of the aristocratic Grand Tour in the 18th Century having been historically damned by the 'Black Legend' as being by nature 'reactionary'. It seems he fed this old tale of Spain and the Spanish people as a backward culture to Cantor and the other comrades in the trenches: 'Arising out of Bates' lecture that Spain has always been the most bloody and reactionary country even ignoring the inquisition. Always feuds, sects, parties and church factions...'

Bates may have convinced Cantor of the hopelessness of Spanish civilisation, yet, it seems, he was not entirely convinced himself by his own blackballing of Spain, as Burnett Bolloten writes: 'Ralph Bates...wrote to me after he had severed his ties with the Communist Party: "The CP drive against the collectives was absolutely wrong, for while there were plenty of abuses, forced collectivisation..., there were plenty of good collectives, i.e., voluntary ones".' The honest soldier, Ralph Cantor, met his death during the Brunete offensive that failed in July 1937. According to Bernard Barry, Ralph Cantor was chatting with his pal Jud Coleman from Cheetham when he was shot in the neck near Mosquito Ridge. There were 331 volunteers in the British Battalion at the start of the Brunete campaign and only 42 at the end. Later General Kléber reported to Moscow: 'I have begun to worry a great deal about the International Brigades.' ●

Local Campaigns for Blue Plaques

JOE FILLINGHAM: FROM BURY TO DIE AT TERUEL

by Charles Jepson: National Clarion Cycling Club 1895

THE Fillingham family moved to Parkhills Road Bury from nearby Warrington during the 1920's. Joe was their eldest son and for eight years he worked at H.W. Sly a jeweller's in Haymarket Street. He was a political activist who frequently spoke at open air meetings on the Market Ground. He wrote forceful letters to the *Bury Times* and *Daily Worker*. He was active in the *General & Municipal Workers' Union* and represented the union on *Bury Trades' Council*. In addition he was Secretary of the Bury branch of the *Communist Party*, a founder member of the local branch of the *National Unemployed Workers' Movement*, a member of the Bury branch of the *League of Nations Union* and member of the *Bury Co-operative Men's Guild*.

In August 1937, Joe left his home to help the plight of the Spanish people. In a letter to his parents he wrote: 'I am now going to practice what I have preached. The Spanish people's fight is our fight, and I am going to help them.' He travelled to Spain and as a Communist immediately joined the *British Battalion* of the *International Brigade*. By December he had been promoted to the rank of sergeant and along with his comrades of the *1st Company* was about to take part in what was to be the most decisive battle of the war—*The Battle of Teruel*.

Roy Watts, a member of the *National Clarion Cycling Club*, and a young man with almost identical political credentials to those of Joe wrote a letter to his friends in Leicester shortly before his death: 'I am happy and proud to place my services with the workers of Spain in their heroic fight against the bestialities of Fascism; we have nothing in common with the outlook of the Fascists who glorify death as their ideal.'

Bury branch of *Unite the Union* and *Tameside Trade Union Council* are both seeking blue plaque commemorations for Joseph Fillingham and James Keogh. The *National Cycling Clarion Club 1895* are also involved. Tributes in memory of Joe Fillingham at the Co-operative Hall were reported in *The Bury Times* on Wednesday, March 9th, 1938, after he was killed in fierce fighting at Teruel in northern Spain: 'Mr Fillingham was well known for his social and political work in the town. He was a member of the Major Attlee Company of the *International Brigade* fighting for the Spanish Government against the insurgents commanded by General Franco.... Mr. Ernest Brooks, president of the Trades Council, spoke of Mr Fillingham as a man who had made the supreme sacrifice for his convictions. He was a man who had the sincerest sympathy for the unemployed. He was a man willing to devote all his time and ability—and he had great ability—to the things which he believed.'

Later 'Mr. Tanshy, of the *Unemployed Association* said that he considered the tragedy of the death of Mr. Fillingham in terms of an expression used by an unemployed man who had asked him "Is it worth while?" Mr Fillingham answer had been "Carry on". Mr. Fillingham had always helped the Bury unemployed and he would ever be remembered by the *Trades Council Unemployed Association*.' ●

We love life, but because we love it we do not begrudge giving it in order to save humanity from the enemies of life. Many of our best comrades have already fallen and we do not hide the bitter pain of their loss but their deaths call not for mourning but for action. I believe Joe Fillingham would have shared these sentiments as he faced overwhelming odds on the heights above Teruel.

During the period of the war General Franco's aim was to threaten Madrid and isolate it from the northern region of Catalonia. The Republicans however seized the initiative by attacking first along the Saragossa front, particularly against the defences of Teruel. The Republican assault on the town was launched on 21st, December 1937 amid a snow storm and temperature of minus 20 degrees centigrade and the town was finally captured on the 7th, January 1938. It was a significant but short-lived victory

for the Republican forces. Franco's Nationalist forces counter-attacked and turned the Republican besiegers into the besieged. Faced by overwhelming odds the Republican army were forced to withdraw on 20th, February 1938. It was on 20th, January 1938, during the defence of Teruel, that Joe Fillingham of Bury finally fell victim to fascist fire.

The siege and counter siege of Teruel showed that bravery and strategy could win a battle, but superiority of arms, particularly in the air, and manpower would win the war. The Republicans failure to hold Teruel greatly reduced its chances of winning the war and condemned it to a defensive strategy against overwhelming odds. ●

*My brother was a pilot,
He received a card one day,
He packed his belongings in a box
And southward took his way.*

*My brother is a conqueror,
Our people are short of space
And to gain more territory is
An ancient dream of the race*

*The space that my brother conquered
Lies in the Guadarrama massif,
Its length is six feet, two inches,
Its depth four feet and a half.*

Spanish Civil War poem by Bertolt Brecht.

Bolton embraces Basque Children fleeing hell of Condor Legion

Researched by Charles Jepson and Stuart Walsh
(National Clarion Cycling Club 1895)

ON the 9th, June 1937, fifty weary Basque children arrived in Bolton at Watermillock, Crompton Way, Astley Bridge. After travelling from San Sebastian, Tolosa and Bilbao, all towns in the Basque region of Spain, they were fleeing the Spanish Civil War troubles that had started when the troops of General Mola's offensive began on the Basque republicans in March 1937. Earlier that year on Monday 26th, April, at 4.30 the main church bell in Guernica had been rung to warn of an air attack: it was market day and many farmers had come into the town with their cattle and sheep. Later on three squadrons from Burgos carpet-bombed the town systematically in 20 minute relays for two and a half hours. *

It was tragic scenes like these that Bolton's Basque children had already experienced in their native land, and were now seeking refuge from at Watermillock. The local newspaper the *Journal & Guardian* says: '[Those] children who came from San Sebastian saw daily fighting in the trenches and those from Bilbao have known the horror of daily bombing raids.' Some 400 local people greeted the children on their arrival. The *Journal & Guardian* reported on the children's arrival: 'Some were almost too tired to eat the light meal prepared for them, but [the next day] appetites sharpened by the 270-mile journey from Southampton, worked overtime. Porridge was an unaccustomed dish, pottage having been the chief food at the Southampton camp: but once the

*Antony Beevor writes:

'(Carpet bombing had just been invented by the Condor Legion when attacking the republican positions around Oviedo [in the Asturias])... Eyewitnesses [in Guernica] described the resulting scenes in terms of hell and the apocalypse. Whole families were buried in the ruins of their houses or crushed in the refugios [air-raid shelters]; cattle and sheep, blazing with white phosphorous, ran crazily between the burning buildings until they died. Blackened humans staggered blindly through the flames, smoke and dust...'

children discovered it could be liberally sprinkled with sugar, plates were quickly sent up for more. Coffee, milk, bread and butter and jam completed the breakfast meal and then came games on the lawn...' One girl Dolorez Lopez, aged 16, was worried about her family. She had three brothers and a father

fighting on the Bilbao front, and although she had written eight letters home she'd had no reply.

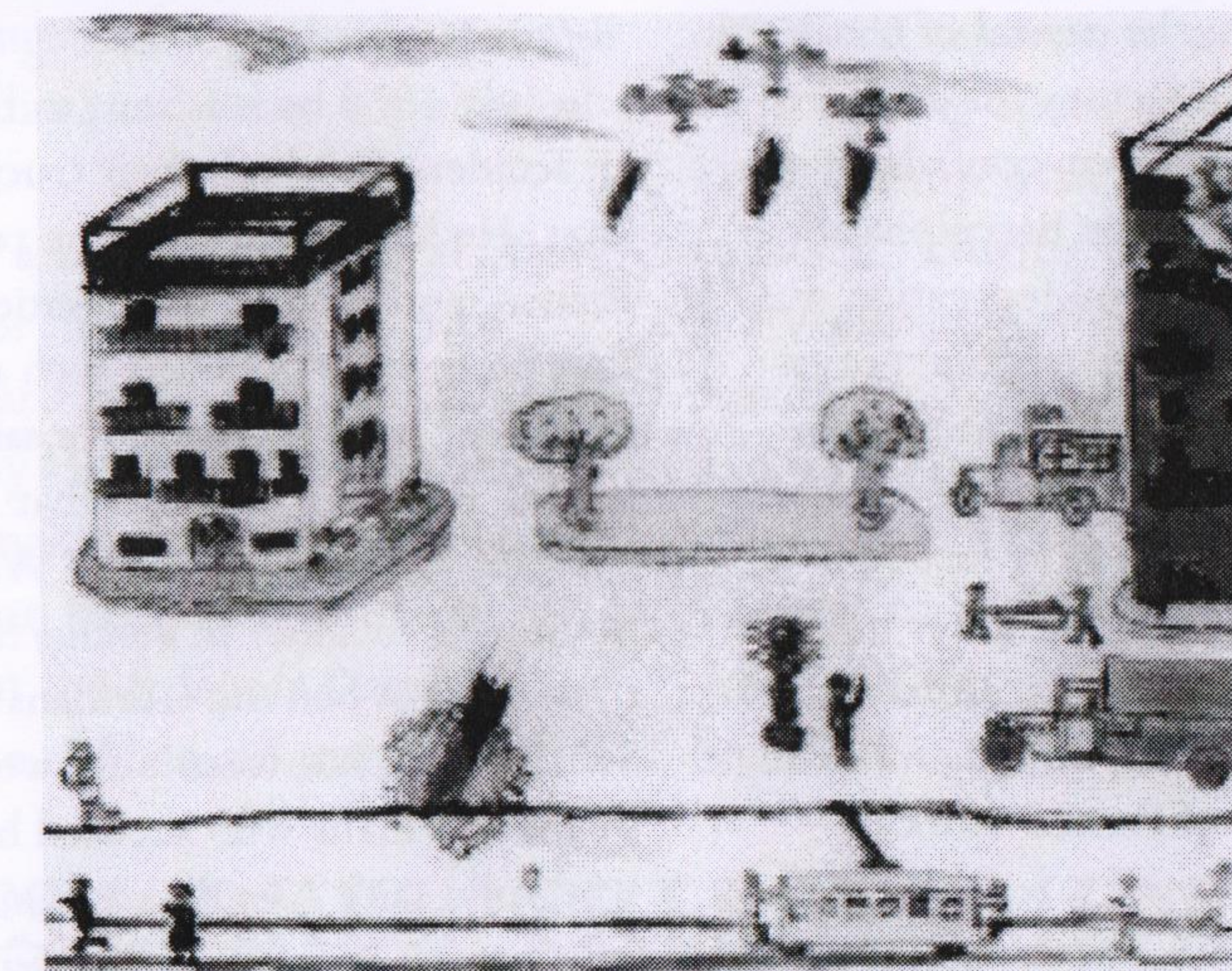
Two teachers—Nocimi Marques and Martina Astiazarain—were accompanying the children—and there is a plan to use Spanish text books and a Spanish translation of H.G. Wells's book '*A History of the World*'. A young 13-year-old Catalan girl—whose mother is English, Maria

Montserrat Fan, acted as interpreter on this occasion.

The Secretary of Bolton & District United Trades Council, Frank Knights, wrote to his fellow members saying: 'The civil war in Spain has created many unfortunate difficulties affecting the whole world, but the most regrettable feature of the trouble is the effect upon children. They are unable to help themselves. Innocent victims of brutal and in many cases fiendish atrocity they have been forced to leave their own country and find shelter in

other lands. Many of them are orphans having lost their parents during the struggle for supremacy now being waged in Spain.'

A fund was set up to support the upkeep and schooling of the children at Watermillock. ●



Basque children's watercolour of bombs falling on the Basque land

James Keogh

FOR over a year *Tameside Trade Union Council* has been seeking a blue plaque for Ashton's hero of the Spanish Civil War James Keogh. Jimmy Keogh from Ashton-under-Lyne died, killed in action, at Calaceite in March 1938 when his company encountered a party of Italian soldiers. The publication, *Northern Voices*, says: 'James Keogh died on a bleak country road to Calaceite, in Aragon on the 31st, March 1938, in a confrontation in which some 150 of his mates were killed. Neither his grave or his remains have ever been found despite a visit to the local cemetery by his nephew [Mike Harrison] in 2007. More than 100,000 Spaniards disappeared as a result of that war and are still being sought by their families: farmers still find their bones in their fields.'

Tameside TUC supports the claim for a blue plaque for James

Keogh because, among other things, it accepts the claim made by the Tory intellectual, Harold Nicolson, that the 'second world war began in July 1936, when the Germans started their intervention in Spain.' The Secretary of the *International Brigade Memorial Trust* is also supporting this application for a blue plaque for James Keogh. His family, his sister Clare still lives in Stalybridge, have made it clear they would like a blue plaque for James and are anxious to know what happened to his remains.

Tameside Arts & Events Department, responsible for awarding blue plaques, will decide in January 2010 as to if James deserves a blue plaque for his ultimate sacrifice of dying in the cause of freedom and democracy in 1938. His own sister said: 'After all these years and now, at last, people are talking about James'. ●

Spanish War: Them Who Got Away!

INTERVIEW WITH PEDRO CUADRADO



Pedro: former Spanish Republican Guard in Spanish Civil War, at his home in Bolton in November 2005

PEDRO CUADRADO, now 86, did not always live in Bolton on Halliwell Road: in July 1936 his family was plunged into the midst of the Spanish Civil War in Barcelona when he was only 15-years-old. His family had migrated to Barcelona, the capital of Catalonia, from Murcia and his father worked at a factory making fertilizers and was a member of the famous trade union confederation: the CNT. Pedro, who had been born just outside Barcelona at Mongat, told us: 'The (Socialist) UGT trade union federation was very small in Barcelona. His older brother, Antonio, died of typhus while serving in the Spanish republican army in the war in 1937.

Pedro worked in a rug making factory for a year or so and worked as a volunteer with the Red Cross at night. Later he joined the Republican Police or local Guardia in Barcelona at the age of 17. Once in the police he went on duties seeking out smugglers, Fascists and the '5th Column': agents of Franco working against the republican government in Catalonia.

He said that though his family was in the CNT national trade union confederation he was 'not an anarchist as he didn't understand that philosophy', but he was a 'trade unionist'. Pedro said the CNT was the most 'important trade union in Barcelona' and Barcelona was the biggest and most modern city in Spain. The UGT (socialist) was bigger in Madrid he said, but 'Barcelona' he claimed, 'is the first town that won against the fascists'. 'You have Durruti', he added, 'he belonged to the anarchists and Ascaso, and when Durruti died he had maybe 1 million people go to his funeral because he liberated Barcelona: good fighter you see. People who supported the Revolution.'

He tells us there were not many communists in Spain in 1936: 'a few thousand' (in February 1936 the party put its own membership at 30,000). Pedro told us: 'The Commissars came from Russia during the Civil War and were taking over everything'. Undermining 'the Socialists, the Spanish republicans and the CNT' trade union confederation'.

When asked why he kept referring to the Spanish Civil War

as a 'revolution', Pedro said: 'Because a revolution is where you throw the rich people out and the Civil War is just the fight against Franco'. But Pedro insisted that in 1936 that what happened in Barcelona 'definitely it was a revolution!'

In July 1938 he was sent to the battle of the Ebro but owing to an accident in which their truck turned over and he arrived too late. He later went with the refugees across the frontier into France, and crossed the frontier on the 7th, January 1939. There they were kept in camps such as Bacares, and dug holes in the sand to shelter from the sun. He said that had he gone back to Spain he would 'have been shot' and that 'thousands died like that'.

When the Second World War started in September 1939 Pedro became 'a volunteer in working companies on the Luxemburg border with Germany.' When the Germans entered France Pedro retreated to Switzerland, but wasn't allowed in. Afterwards he was captured by the Germans who accused him of being 'a communist'; Pedro truthfully said 'I am not communist!' and untruthfully claimed he 'was a young Spanish grape-picker'. He later escaped from the Germans and lived rough with other Spaniards in the French countryside. As the Germans retreated and the allies took them as 'prisoners of war' and sent them to England, first to Colchester military camp. Pedro told a British officer that they weren't 'prisoners of war', and he was sent by the British intelligence officer with a Spanish delegation to the Ministry of War in London to describe the German fortifications in France. From Colchester he went to Ad-



Young Pedro (on far left) at Addlington Camp in *From Manchester to Spain* [2009] by Bernard Barry [photo by Marie Louise Bernerie: was part of memoirs of Vernon Richards an editor of Freedom, the anarchist journal]

dlington Camp near Chorley, in Lancashire. From Lancashire they sent telegrams to Tito in Yugoslavia and President Cardenas in Mexico asking for support and Manchester trade unionists like Horris Newbold came to help. On his release Pedro got a job with Grundy (father of Bill Grundy a presenter on Granada TV in the 1960s) in Salford's Langworthy Road and later with Friedman in Back Turner Street in Shudehill on £6 a week. In 1964, he opened a Spanish Taverna in Bolton, which closed in 2000. ●

'NO TIME FOR ROMANCE UNTIL WAR IS OVER'

Account of Stalybridge girl—Lillian Urmston's part in Spanish Civil War by Derek Pattison: President of Tameside TUC in his personal capacity

ALTHOUGH never involved in party politics, nurse Lillian Urmston, from Stalybridge, always sympathised with 'the underdog'. Born in 1915, Lillian had lived on Copley Street and had attended St. Paul's elementary school. She had also trained as a nurse at the Lake Hospital in Ashton.

As one of a number of qualified British nurses, she arrived in Spain in June 1937. Her train journey through Spain had been hazardous and difficult as the train frequently came under fire from enemy aircraft. Both Lillian and a fellow travelling companion, Dorothy Low, an Australian nurse, had also been detained in Port Bou. In Spain, Lillian was attached to a medical unit and worked on the Aragon front rendering medical assistance to injured government troops. She was also a member of the Territorial Army nursing services for Britain. When on leave from Spain, Lillian often addressed many local meetings and organised fundraising in order to obtain medical and other supplies to take back to Spain.

In October 1938, she addressed a Labour meeting at Stalybridge Town Hall and appealed for funds. A number of speakers referred to the 'splendid and heroic work' that Lillian had undertaken in Spain. In nearby Hyde, a womens' committee had been fundraising and making woollen garments and socks to send to the Republican troops in Spain. In Ashton, a benefit night was held at the *Palais de Danse*.

At the meetings where she spoke, Lillian referred to the

house-to-house collections which had raised money for medical and other supplies for Spain. She told the local 'Ashton Reporter' newspaper that in 'certain quarters' in Stalybridge:

'I have had a great deal of hostility to meet but in spite of it all, our efforts to obtain funds have met with a lot of appreciation from people not only in Stalybridge but Hyde, Dukinfield, Ashton, Manchester and Kendal. The Stalybridge Committee formed to help the medical aid fund has done nobly. The house-to-house and other collections have had a splendid response and it is mainly due to the efforts of the working class that I am getting financial success.'

Shortly before returning to Spain, Lillian told the local newspapers: 'Something has been said here about romance. I have many friends in this country, but I have no time to think about love, romance, or marriage, until this war is finished.'

On leaving Spain, Lillian Urmston was interned in a French camp with Spanish medical staff before being released. During the *Second World War* she worked as an army-nursing officer and was badly injured by shellfire in Anzio, Italy. In later life, she became a writer/journalist and with her husband, who she married in 1945, she travelled to Kuala Lumpur to give nursing assistance to the Chinese Indian survivors who had worked on the railways. After the war she returned to Spain on several occasions. She died in 1990. ●

MUJERES LIBRES: FREE WOMEN OF SPAIN

by Barry Woodling and others

'A notable phenomenon of the war', says Anthony Beevor, 'was the spontaneous growth of a women's movement after the 1936 elections.' Mr Beevor claims: 'It was born, not of...theory from abroad, but of women's instinctive conviction that the overthrow of the class system should mean the end of the patriarchal system as well.' The anarcho-feminist organisation **Mujeres Libres**, that grew to 38,000 strong during the war, had been sticking posters up in the red light areas calling on prostitutes to give up prostitution and offering to train them to acquire skills for productive work.

Mujeres Libres was concerned with issues of the subordination of women such as illiteracy, economic decency, and ignorance about health care, child care and sex education. In Barcelona they set up 'flying day-care centres' to provide in-home child care for women, allowing them to attend union meetings. Most of their activity focussed on combating economic exploitation. **Mujeres Libres** organised a huge literacy campaign for women. Their institutes and centres, besides fighting illiteracy, held advanced classes in languages, typing, stenography, 'professional courses' such as nursing, child care, craft skills: electrical and mechanical, and general weekly discussion groups.

In August 1937 the first conference of the **National Federation of Mujeres Libres** took place in Valencia and its

statutes became:

- ◆ To create a conscious and responsible feminine force that will act as a vanguard of progress.
- ◆ To establish for this purpose schools, institutes, lectures, special courses, etc., to train the woman and emancipate her from the triple slavery to which she has been and still is submitted: slavery of ignorance, slavery of being a woman and slavery as a worker.

In Barcelona, the anarchists took over the *Fomento del Trabajo Nacional*, this became their headquarters and that of the regional CNT committees, the committees of **Juventudes Libertarias** (Libertarian Youth) and the **Union de Mujeres Libres** (Union of Free Women). In December 1936, there was collaboration between the Libertarian Youth, and the **POUM** youth movement and on 11th, February 1937, a front of revolutionary youth was formed, consisting of anarchist and **POUM** youth groups, co-operative youth, young people from the **Syndicalist Party** and **Mujeres Libres**. Three days later, writes Robert Alexander: 'it presented itself to the masses at an enormous meeting in the Plaza de Catalonia.' A meeting of this youth body planned for Valencia in May 1937 to set a national basis was prevented by the 'May events' and suppression of the **POUM** youth and the **POUM** itself by the **PSUC** (Communist) police. ●

Barcelona's May Days

by Brian Bamford, Secretary of Bury Branch of *Unite the Union*

THE Spanish Communists who had been weak numerically —Gerald Brenan puts their party membership in March 1936 at 'no more than 3,000'*—had been trying to grab power since the winter of 1936. Their method was to stop ministers exercising control over the People's Army. But the anarchists had made it clear that any attempt to put non-anarchist officers on their troops would be met by force. Thus the communists sucked up to the regular army officers. Enticing the most ambitious and wangling their own placemen into key positions. A Moscow report in March 1937 suggest that 27 out of 38 key posts on the Central Front were held by communists and three more by sympathisers.

Anthony Beevor writes: 'The secret police was taken over by NKVD (Soviet Secret Police) agents in the late autumn of 1936 and soon became the communists' most feared weapon.' He adds: 'Even Wenceslao Carillo, the director-general of security, found himself powerless against them.' It seems many of the Spaniards who were employed in this work 'could hardly be described as "anti-fascist", but they were given party cards nevertheless.'

These communist secret coppers, incited by their NKVD bosses, arrested and interrogated members of other parties. Just after the battle of Brihuega, Antonio Verrardini, the chief of staff of Cipriano Mera's 14th Division, went to Madrid on a 24-hour leave. Once there he was detained and charged with treason and espionage on the authority of José Cazorla the communist councillor of public order. With a heavily armed escort and Sanz, commander of the 70th Brigade Mera went to the capital. He told General Miaja that if Verrardini wasn't released by the com-



Peasants 'The Land is yours'

*During the Dictatorship of Primo de Rivera between 1923 and 1930 the Communist Party had been so insignificant, according to Gerald Brenan, that 'the Government had not even troubled to suppress their newspaper, *Mundo Obrero*'. In the Cortes (Spanish parliament) in 1933 the Party had only returned one deputy. In their 15 years of existence they had only got a working class following in Seville and the Asturias. In both cases they had captured trade union syndicates from the CNT during internal conflicts in that trade union confederation. Their membership in Seville was among dock hands and café waiters where they were at war with the CNT with the socialist UGT union confederation looking on. Brenan says: 'the coincidence can scarcely be accidental—that Seville and Cadiz were also the birthplaces of the Falange. Even allowing for the fact that the taverns and brothels, was not propitious to the formation of a disciplined proletarian movement, it must be agreed that the Communist penetration had destroyed all possibility of working class solidarity. The consequences of this were felt when in July (1936) General Queipo de Llano was able to capture the city—with a handful of men.' ●

Solidaridad Obrera announced: 'We have made too many concessions and have reached the moment of turning off the tap.' Yet still the communist control continued. On the 16th, April 1937 the Catalan government was reshuffled and Juan Comorera, leader of the communist *PSUC*, was made Minister of Justice. While on 25th, April *carabineros* were sent by Juan Negrin to take over control ▶

munists he would be freed by force. Miaja had him freed immediately. Beevor writes: 'Mera was to return to Madrid on similar mission when the communist persecution of the *POUM* reached its height.' One time he obtained the release of Mika Etchebehere, the woman militia commander, who had been arrested for 'disaffection to the Republic'. On seeing the director-general of security he had her released and brought to his headquarters so she could not be 'snatched again'. Beevor says: 'During that spring of 1937 the communist police and the anarchist militia confronted each other in Madrid in an increasingly bitter struggle.' Melchor Rodriguez, the delegate in charge of the pris-

ons, and the *CNT* press exposed José Cazorla, the communist in charge of public order, for organising secret prisons for holding socialists, anarchists and republicans and torturing and executing them as spies and traitors after they had been freed by popular tribunals.

Some anarchists such as 'The Friends of Durruti' denounced the 'Stalinist counter-revolution', but called for a government made up of the *UGT* and *CNT*. With the decision in the winter of 1936 to exclude the *POUM* from the Catalan government the anarchists realised they too were at risk from the communists and their allies on the right. On March 4th, 1937 the Catalan *Generalitat* (Government) dissolved the anarchist control patrols and the security council dominated by the Iberian Anarchist Federation. The anarcho-syndicalist *CNT* newspaper

▶ of the Pyrenean frontier posts from the *CNT* militias. In Madrid, José Cazorla, angry that his secret prisons had been denounced by the *CNT* newspaper, closed it down. The same day the communist union boss, Roldán Cortada, was killed (Beevor says 'probably by an anarchist, but their have been other theories'). The trade union May Day parades of 1937 were cancelled to avoid more trouble and on 2nd, May, *Solidaridad Obrera* asked workers not to allow themselves to be disarmed.

Next day the Catalan Government, intent on taking back all power it had lost since 19th, July 1936, decided to take control of *Telefónica* in the Plaza de Cataluña. It was managed by a mixed committee of the *CNT* and *UGT* trade unions and the anarchists had considered it their own since July 1936. Three trucks of assault guards led by the communist commissioner



Rodriguez Salas went to *Telefónica* and surprising the sentries disarmed them. But the workers were alerted and a burst of machine gun fire scattered the assault guards stopping their advance. Next word got round the working-class districts and people began to pull up paving stones and cobbles to make barricades in *Las Ramblas*, the *Paralelo*, the old city, the *Via Layetana* and the outer barrio of *Saints* and *Sant Andreu*. The communist *PSUC* and government lined up against the *CNT* unions, the anarchist *FAI* and *FIJL*, and the *POUM*. Peace negotiations between the *CNT* and the Government ended in stalemate and the *CNT* declared a general strike throughout the city. A German *Comintern* agent reported to Moscow: 'No vehicle which did not belong to the *CNT* was allowed to pass and more than 200 police and assault guards were disarmed.' Beevor says: 'Government forces and the *PSUC* occupied only a few areas in the centre, while the anarcho-syndicalists and their allies controlled the greater part of the city as well as the heavy guns in the fortress of Montjuich.' He adds: 'Whenever the assault guards attempted to seize a building, they were met with a hail of bullets.'

The anarchist leader Garcia Oliver and Mariano Vázquez, the national secretary of the *CNT*, got to Barcelona with two leaders of the socialist *UGT*. The central Government in Valencia had asked them to try to settle the serious situation in Barcelona. The anarchist leaders made an appeal for a ceasefire over the radio and the anarchist intellectual Abad de Santillán went to talk to the control patrols. But as the anarchists were

trying to calm the situation, Beevor writes: 'La Batalla, the *POUM's* newspaper, argued that the best method of defence was attack and called for the immediate establishment of committees for the defence of the revolution.' On the 5th, May, the anarchist leaders agreed a compromise with Catalan president Companys in which Artemi Aiguader, the Catalan councillor for internal security, would resign. But still the streets remained tense. At 1pm the general secretary of the *UGT* was shot and later the dead bodies of the Italian anarchists Camillo Berneri and Franco Barbieri were found, as well as those of Francisco Ferrer, nephew of the libertarian educationalist executed in 1909 after the *Semana Trágica*, and Domingo Ascaso, brother of the anarchist trade unionist hero killed in July 1936 in the momentous assault on the *Atarazanas* barracks. Largo Caballero, leader of the central government in Valencia, who some see as the real victim of the

communist attempted takeover, decided to agree to send the Assault Guard. Anthony Beevor says: 'The reinforcements which had meanwhile arrived in Barcelona...increased the government's forces towards the level of the rebel (Franco's nationalist) troops (of) the previous July, but they had even less hope of taking the city.' Yet in the interests of the war effort the *CNT* brought about a ceasefire and on the 7th, May 1937 the barricades began to be taken down. At a cabinet meeting on 15th, May the communist minister, Uribe, demanded on Moscow's orders that the *POUM* be suppressed and its leaders arrested. The Prime Minister, Largo Caballero, would not outlaw a working-class party against whom nothing had been proven. At the same time he resurrected the idea of a National Defence Council, original proposed by the anarchists in 1936, of most ministerial posts shared between the *UGT* and *CNT* union bodies. But this was impossible now because Stalin would have cut off the supply of arms and with both the right-wing republicans and socialists against him Caballero was forced to resign. Thus as Juan Negrin took over the government of the Republic it became what Negrin and the communists called a 'controlled democracy'. This led to control from above, an end to parliamentary debate and any freedom of the press. On his first day in power Negrin closed the *POUM's* *La Batalla* newspaper and allowed the communist NKVD-controlled secret police a free hand in persecuting Moscow's critics. ●

'Land & Freedom' writer Jim Allen's 1995 interview with Brian Bamford: Looking Forward from the Spanish War and studying the aftermath

Brian Bamford: You and Ken [Loach] have been keen to do this film for some time. What drew you to this topic in the first place?

Jim Allen: It was four and a half years before we got it made. With the fall of Stalinism in Europe and Russia, and the claims of Margaret Thatcher, etc., that there you are the dream has ended, 'Socialism's impossible! Only the market economy rules!' Well the truth is that there never had been socialism in the Soviet Union.

We were looking for a project that could show this. I met a bloke who was organising the coming together of the International Brigade, and suddenly it clicked, and I rung Ken and told him: 'I think we've got a subject'.

Because Spain in the 1930s is everything—mass unemployment, the rise of fascism, the rise of Franco and his Generals—then you had the betrayal of Stalin, especially in Catalonia—in Barcelona. So all the elements were there, and the intention was to make a film ending on an optimistic note. And say: well look there is an alternative; we can still go forward; there is another solution. And that was Spain. What could have happened with the correct kind of leadership [editor's italics].

So that was the basic reason, and what we initially thought we'd need was £5 million to make the film. Which sounds a lot—but that's nothing to something of the scope of Spain. But after four and a half years of knocking on doors all we had was £2.5 million. So we sat down and had to make a decision. We could finish up with egg on our face, or we could have a go. So we had a go. And then we had to shoot the entire film in just over 7 weeks. It was horrendous! So that was it; Ken went and Ken did it. I think we just nicked it ...

The heartening thing is that in Spain it has set off a huge discussion among Spanish workers. The crew, the Spanish crew, were only young people; they didn't have a clue that this was their history. They knew nothing about it. Some Spanish film-makers said that is now the benchmark, and that now it's time that we dug into our own history.

This is a healthy response.

It has been shown in lots of cinemas in France, Germany, Italy—it has done very well. But in this country it's the old, old story. The film was released on 5th, October. And up to 2 weeks ago all we had was up to 17 cinemas showing it throughout the United Kingdom ... and half of them were art houses ... we cannot break into the mainstream cinemas where workers go. That's terrible, terrible.

Why?

The resistance of the distributors. The distributors don't spend enough money to distribute the film. But mainly the big theatre chains—the bloke at Salford Quays [cinema complex] ... he made a statement to the press that in his opinion it is an 'art film'. They want to pack the cinemas with the pop-corny American movies: Pulp Fiction, Arnold Schwarzenegger and stuff like that.

Our answer is that wherever we've shown it, it's been packed. At the Corner [Manchester] you couldn't get in. In Cardiff there were at least 200 people turned away. So there is no evidence that it hasn't been packing them in. It's done very well elsewhere—like France, in Germany, and Spain of course.

Did some of the money for the film come from Germany?

Yeh, yeh, Spain, Germany and a tiny amount from England. A bit from the BBC, and British Screen. But not much!

Explaining his reasons for doing the film, on Radio 4 last Friday, Ken Loach said: 'I don't think you can understand 20th Century history unless you can understand what happened in Spain in 1936'. Isn't that a bit of an exaggeration, Jim? ▶ ▶ ▶

This interview was conducted one morning in November 1995 in Middleton, Greater Manchester, in the front room of the Alkrington home of former building worker and writer on *Coronation Street*, Jim Allen, who had recently addressed a *Premiere* of his and Ken Loach's film *Land & Freedom* at the *Corner House* cinema in Manchester. It was first published in the *Freedom Press* journal *The Raven* in Spring 1996. This transcript is slightly edited.

I didn't know he'd said that, but it would be an old recording because he's in Nicaragua. I suppose what he meant was that the signal was Spain, it all happened in that period of time.

He said the fog cleared in 1936, and you could see what the score was!

RIGHT! The crucial thing was Spain revealed Stalin's hand. Three years later he signed a pact with Hitler. It was a kind of dress rehearsal for World War II ... It was probably a kind of defining moment. If you understand the lessons of Spain, then you understand the lessons today with Tony Blair—the Social Democrats, who'll always betray you; the role of the Communist Party; the role of the West, who refused arms to Spain. Everything was there in that framework.

You said this film was done on a shoe-string, and that this influenced the final structuring of the story. Didn't this work to your advantage and make for a shorter, more strikingly forceful and emotional film?

Yeah, it could be argued that the device of seeing the story through the grand-daughter's eyes was maybe better than what we had originally intended. But having written the script I know what would have gone out [in the original version]. Budget determines content ...

There were huge chunks, like Barcelona, which would have included fantastic scenes of the revolution in action.

There were huge scenes with the women—representing the role of women. A lot missed out on that ...

In one of the drafts there was a man who I have a lot of admiration for: Durruti. He was a power-house. In fact if Durruti had lived I don't think the Stalinists would have got away with it in Catalonia. That's a personal opinion.

So all this had to be taken out, because there is so little money, and it can't be over two hours long.

The reason I used the device of the grand-daughter is because using the voice-over of the grandfather's letters: these were describing scenes we couldn't afford to put on the screen. Instead of seeing Barcelona, we talked about it. So I was pushed into that and had to create that device to save money. It could be argued that a leaner picture was better than the one I envisaged, but there were many elements there which I thought should have gone in but which couldn't because of the time, the budget.

That brings me to another question. George Orwell in his essay 'Looking Back on the Spanish War', said: 'The backbone of the resistance to Franco was the Spanish working class, especially the urban trade union members'. Now apart from the Barcelona telephone exchange conflict between the anarchist CNT [trade unionists] and the communists, you seem to concentrate on the rural workers in Aragon. Hugh Thomas in *El Pais* called the film 'Homage to Aragon'. In a way the film is almost a portrayal of a guerrilla war—a peasant war.

Think about it. What we show in the film happened. In the collectives, in the countryside, that happened. Yes, in the factories in Barcelona we couldn't afford to shoot there. We would have had to take a section of Barcelona and take the TV aerials down. We couldn't afford it.

But with £5 million you could have done it?

We would have got into the industries; we would have got some strike meetings. But it was impossible. In the countryside we showed what happened. The Stalinists did smash up the collectives. They did murder individuals: anarchists and POUM members and so forth. So that was correct. The other dimension was what happened in the ▶ ▶ ▶

▶ industrial areas, but that was not even considered when we [only] had £2.5 million quid.

And of course there was the commune scene with the peasants discussing in that long, long scene ...

Well yes. And you say that is the core of the film?

A very important scene.

That's what it's all about, you say. But some critics have seen this scene of the peasant's debate with the POUM militia as an aesthetically sterile interlude. What do you have to say to them?

They don't know their arse from their elbow some of these critics. The most serious critics singled that one scene out as the most important scene in the film. This broke the mould. I mean a Hollywood film would never dare have 2 minutes, the scene lasts 2 or 3 minutes, in the way this one did. That was the root of the issue, that was the question. It was about land. So the peasants had to discuss it, to argue. And you got the backward ones and the others. To me that scene was vital.

It's been said that: 'A revolutionary army, like the POUM or Durruti's anarchist ... column, can sometimes win by enthusiasm, but a conscript army, like the Republican Government and the communists were trying to set up, must win with weapons—superior weapons.' How could the left have won Spain?

It's a myth. It's a myth which the Stalinists have put out that these [the POUM and the anarchist militias] were well intentioned! 'Very brave!'; 'but militarily speaking they were a rabble!'. 'There was no discipline!' 'There was no organisation!' There were elements of that, yes, but both Durruti and POUM believed in the blueprint of an organised military army with orders being carried out; with discipline. What they did not want was to let a military hierarchy take-over, which was what the 5th Brigade of the Communist Party did.

So they used that as an excuse. Of course, enthusiasm will never win anything. It's got to be there, but you need the arms. And of course the reason there were no arms is because, on Stalin's orders, the arms only went to units controlled by the Communist Party. And no way to Catalonia! No way! So there were no arms because Stalin made a point of making sure that the arms didn't reach Catalonia. Orwell pointed that out in *Homage to Catalonia*.

David is presented in the film as a kind of Scouse bumpkin—a kind of innocent abroad. Right?

Not a bumpkin! I would reckon in 1936 the average type who went to Spain, he was representative of that. Apart from die-hard communists who had been around, lots of them went over there with the vaguest notions, like 'I'm a communist, I'm going to fight a fascist', and that's it. So it was seeing it through his eyes as he developed the experience. So at the end of the film you can say I stand on higher ground—I can see further.

Yes, that's realistic, and it was noted at the time that there was immense ignorance in England about the Spanish situation.

A kid from Oldham who went, he'd never been out of Manchester. He didn't even know the Pyrenees separated France from Spain. He went in his galoshes to climb the Pyrenees. Tremendous ignorance! He nearly lost his feet. Only the middle class went abroad.

But since you have done the film, do you think we have got a good grasp of what happened in Spain, even among the chattering classes?

All the film can do is focus attention, not just on Spain but on betrayal and on the possibilities. It's relative to today. There's a link between today and Spain because again we've got a rising fascism, we've got mass unemployment. And the further to the Right the Tories go, the more to the Right Labour goes.

I've done meetings ... in France, Switzerland, Manchester, Liverpool, Cardiff, and always the discussion after the film is contempo-

rary. It's about saying to this generation: look, don't give up, it can be done. There is a way out of this mad-house, but certain conditions are necessary ... and if it happens again, don't make the same mistakes. And it's an answer to the Thatcherites and Tony Blair, who say, pointing to the Soviet Union: 'There you are, the great experiment failed'. So it's got knock-on effects.

Why do you think it is that yours and Ken's work is so highly regarded abroad in France, at Cannes and now in Spain, but receives less acclaim in Britain?

Well maybe because we're home-grown ... It's strange! Germany, France, they're all capitalist countries. Perhaps it seems more palatable over there.

But among the masses, among the workers our work is popular. We had a film on about a month ago called *Raining Stones*, on television, and that got a tremendous response. But that again got very few showings at the cinema. Very few. It appeared in Manchester at the Odeon theatre, only because they were involved in the thing. We did a deal with them—the first night we had a premiere there and all the money from that night goes to them. But that was the exception. We got mass [viewer] response even in television for films like *Days of Hope* and stuff like that. They had an enormous following.

But that 1984 documentary—I don't know if you were involved—that Ken did on the trade unions, 'A Crisis of Leadership', I think it was called. That's never been shown?

That was banned because ... the so-called balance was wrong. You had him at the ETU [Electrical Trades' Union] - what's he called, that vicious little gangster? You know who I'm talking about, he got very violent. In one incident Ken went to interview him and he got very violent. He wouldn't talk to him, So the ITV watchdog said to Ken: 'It's balance! If you can't get his side then we can't show yours'.

But he wouldn't talk to Ken. So it was just banned for technical reasons. He made that with Chris Menzies, I think.

So it was never shown.

Ken Loach has represented himself as being an alternative to the perpetual consensus of media broadcasting. He says he wants stories to reveal conflict and drama about why we live and how we live. What does this mean to you?

Well, that kind of hidden truth in society that a film-maker must reflect. Must deal with these issues—pose alternatives, open debates. And if you think about it, there are very few film-makers who do that. They are concerned with the froth of society.

Ken is a man who has nailed his colours to the mast. You know exactly where he stands. And so when we examine, like in *Days of Hope* or whatever we make, we examine basic fundamental problems involving the working class. We state there is a class struggle and it's got to be resolved—one way or the other. And that's the kind of recipe few film-makers deal in. Which is probably one reason why we scare the pants off them!

Like *Hidden Agenda*, we didn't go as far as it could have gone, or wanted to go, because the lawyers stopped us. But we were the first film-makers to look at Northern Ireland in that particular light. No one else had done that. And even though it wasn't totally satisfactory ... we took it as far as we could. Even though that too won the Cannes award.

Awards don't mean a thing as far as this country is concerned. Awards to me and Ken are baubles. They should, in theory, give you clout. But this *Land & Freedom*, about a month ago in Berlin it won the European Film of the Year', so what more do you want? So while we look upon awards as a useful lever to get work done, it doesn't necessarily mean anything. ●

Land & Freedom Director talking to Richard Porton The Revolution Betrayed

In 1995, Richard Porton interviewed Ken Loach, director of the film *Land & Freedom*, on behalf of *Cineaste*, 'America's leading magazine on the art and politics of the cinema' (PO Box 2242, New York, NY 10009-8917). It was later reprinted in the then anarchist journal of *Freedom Press: The Raven*. This edited transcript is printed here by kind permission of Richard Porton and *Freedom Press*.

Cineaste: Was *Homage to Catalonia* the departure point for Jim Allen's screenplay for *Land & Freedom*?

Ken Loach: It wasn't exactly the departure point, although obviously it's a very important book. Several books were very important and that was one of them. We also looked at a book called *The Red Spanish Notebook* by Juan Bréa and Mary Low, two kids who were there. In addition, we looked at Gabriel Jackson's study, Victor Alba's history of the POUM, and Hugh Thomas's *The Spanish Civil War*. We also talked to a lot of eyewitnesses to fill in the details. The story of the Spanish Revolution is part of the folklore of the left, so it's always been in the back of our minds to do something about it.

The subtitle of the film—'A story from the Spanish Revolution' - is key, since, although documentary films have dealt with these events, fiction films have generally not dealt with the betrayal of the left by the Communist Party.

We were very concerned with this. We put the subtitle in because, immediately, from the start of the film, we wanted people not to start thinking of the Civil War but to think of the social upheaval as well. Part of the mythology of the war is that the left was united against fascism. Another part of the mythology is that all of the so-called democratic countries were against fascism. Both of these things weren't true, as we now know.

Would you talk a bit about your collaboration with Jim Allen on the script? I understand that the flashback structure wasn't originally part of the script.

The film took a very long time to develop. We started with a very broad canvas. The story just kept breaking down. All the effort was to find a set of relationships that would put the political conflict into a personal framework. There's no use making a film where everything says the 'right on' thing when you have no personal drama. It took a long time and many false starts to find a group of people and conflicts which would mirror the political conflict. We tried very hard not to make it mechanical acting out. We wanted it to be an emotional story as well, with people who had the limitations as well as the hopes of their times.

How did you decide to make the character of Blanca an anarchist? Was it thought that there should be some representation of the anarchist position in the film?

Yes, partly that. There was also the fact that a lot of the women we talked to in Spain were anarchist—terrific people, particularly in Barcelona. One woman who, at least until a year ago, was operating a stall in the Barcelona market told us about fighting on the front with her boyfriend. We didn't want everyone to be stamped out of the same political mould. We wanted to reflect the confusion of the time and all the varied personal stories, because a lot of it was haphazard and people ended up fighting along with others for merely accidental reasons. It all happened in a great hurry where everyone rushed off to the front.

In some ways, it was chaotic. But it was also a great, spirited, popular movement. And, of course, Bianca goes along with the POUM because of her boyfriend. I know a man who lives near me in England who went and fought for the POUM. He was very young—seventeen or eighteen—but he just went because he had a good heart.

Is Jim Allen's position close to the POUM?

Well, that was, in general, the position we identified with, since they were anti-Stalinist Marxists. I hesitate to use the word Marxist, because it can be used as a kind of weight around your neck. They don't see the film they just see the label. So I try to avoid using the word. People

think they know what you mean, but they hang you before they see what you have done. In a way, what concerned us much more than the finer points of the politics was the great amount of human spirit, energy, and potential that was betrayed. Those people had enormously affirmative, heart-warming qualities. People were brave and strong and full of ability—that's the optimism, and the tragedy of the film.

These qualities are especially evident in the sequence dealing with the collectivisation debate. How was this sequence planned? I understand you used to mix a lot of professionals and non-professionals. This is one of the film's high points.

Well I hope so. It was a question of finding people who still felt passionate about this issue. Spain's still quite a political place—Franco at least did that. He was quite politicising. You can find anarchists who still have a very strong position. It was very possible to find people who were full of passion from the nearby town. All the villagers were non-professionals, with the exception of the guy who chairs the meeting and the man who is the main opponent of collectivisation. He was an actor because I needed someone who had a bit of grit, to get something going. All of the positions taken by actors did correspond to their actual positions, except for Tom Gilroy, the actor who plays Lawrence. We didn't want to make him a caricature, but to make his position against the revolution as strong as possible. What was very important was that we didn't want to undervalue this argument. It was an honest dilemma, so we wanted to entrust that argument to someone who was an honest intelligent person. And ideally, the audience might go along with him for a time. It's quite good if, at the end of that debate, some of the audience is with Tom.

All the time it suits the purpose of our politicians to talk about how cynical people are, how they don't like politics and how it will never get any better. It suits the status quo to say this because it leaves power in the hands of people who already have power. Nobody gets challenged. The more this myth of cynicism and just look after number one and don't care about anyone else is perpetuated, the more people lose power. The more you can say, 'Look, people have great potential', the more volatile things will get.

Did you talk to many POUM veterans?

Yes. There were a few memorable days when we went round many of the battlefields with a man named John Rocaber who had fought with the POUM. He took us around to places where he had fought and told us exactly what had happened. He was an extraordinary man and what he told us was very vivid. Much of what happened in the film actually happened to him. He was arrested a few miles from the front by the new detachment from the Popular Army. That was very dramatic—or should I say traumatic—for him. After we had taken that journey we incorporated many of his experiences into the film. This was a great help, especially with the last scene.

I've heard about some screenings of the film where people who fought with the Abraham Lincoln Brigade have had heated arguments with those who espouse the position of the POUM.

People who fought with the *Abraham Lincoln Brigade* have a huge emotional investment, like all of the veterans of the international brigades. In many cases, their lives have been based on what they did in Spain. So it's very reasonable for them to disagree and find fault with what this film is about. That's OK! As Jim Allen says, they were the cream of their generation. The last thing we would want to do is not acknowledge what they did. ●

Afterword: Somerset Socialist thoughts on the Spanish Civil War

by Dave Chapple

Postman, Secretary of Bridgewater Trades Council and Executive member of South West TUC Regional Council
MANCHESTER'S
SPANISH CIVIL WAR

contingent has been important to my life as a Somerset socialist. In the early 1980s Manchester International Brigade veteran Joe Norman, living in retirement in my home town of Clevedon, was to us in Clevedon Youth CND, our mentor. We would gather at his flat every fortnight, where his advice was always welcome and wise. He was modest and reticent about Spain, more interested in telling me how he boxed his way across the Soviet Union in a workers'

Olympiad in the 1920s—I think he won the middle-weight division, which makes him a bit more than an 'amateur boxer'! Later I found Judith Cook's account of his time as Franco's prisoner of war: 'What a horrible place! It was controlled by the German Gestapo, and more than 600 (International Brigaders) from 20 different countries were all crammed into one long room. It looked like a dungeon and had walls six feet thick and floors made of stone...I decided to form an education committee to take peoples' minds off things, and classes started in chess, economics and maths...meanwhile dysentery ran through all of us and men died like flies of that and typhoid, and influenza...the toilets were shocking. A sunken room, it was, without water or paper. Men started tearing their clothing to use as paper. The inevitable happened. The sunken room flooded 5 feet deep and in the interests of health volunteers were asked to go and free the blockage. I volunteered with a Canadian and a Scot. I had to dive under all that piss and shit, naked, but we succeeded in clearing the drain and I got an extra 8-ounce loaf as a reward. But my two comrades died of typhoid within a week...'

Another Mancunian friend is Henry Suss of Swinton. Henry is now at a home for the blind in Burnham on Sea. In my book on Henry's life (see *Henry Suss & the Jewish working-class of Manchester & Salford: interviews with Dave Chapple*) there is a chapter on Cheetham Hill Spanish Aid Committee: 'It would be weekend work...eight of us would meet up on a street corner...mostly young communists...when you talked about Spanish children going hungry, most people would give food...6 or 7 out of ten would give...and we carried this on for about 2 years. My father, who was not political, gave a bob (5p) a week out of a ten shillings' (50p) pension...I was so proud of him.'

Howard Andrews (nick-name: Andy), now 99, of Taunton, who rang me up to order the Henry Suss book is my most recent Spanish Civil War friendship. Andy got to Spain in August 1936, well before the International Brigades were formed, and he worked in field hospitals till the end. Andy, a Communist,



Andy and Bob Crow leader of the RMT at Tolpuddle 2006

was jailed for a week by his Doctor and Commanding Officer, Julian Tudor Hart, for failing to salute two visiting Political Commissars (usually communists) and exclaiming 'Shit!' when challenged about it. Andy worked with the brave Stalybridge nurse, Lillian Urmston. Alas, Medical Political Commissar, Winifred Bates was there on one of her puritanical spying missions for Moscow and the Communist Party, sending off damning reports on Lillian or anyone she didn't approve of: as they risked their lives daily! The Spanish Civil War deserves a decent debate.

Thus far in Britain debate has been strangled by our notorious left-wing party loyalties and the indifference of lots of Labour Party and TUC activists and officials. In my personal view the Communist Party, whose 2006 descendants, whilst admitting Stalin's crimes and murder of Andrés Nin, still fiercely defend the conduct of Commissars like Winifred Bates and Wil Paynter, the overthrow of Caballero's Government (Caballero was Spanish Prime Minister up to the May Days of 1937 and leader of the Socialist Trade Union Confederation of the UGT) and their unprovoked attack on the Barcelona Telephone Exchange in May 1937.

Did British Communist Commissars, indirectly or directly, cause the battlefield executions or subsequent torture by secret police of British International Brigaders? Why do some insist on calling the POUM 'Trotskyist', when Andrés Nin and the POUM leaders believed they had broken from Trotsky, and Trotsky himself criticised them as ideological renegades? Why is there no proper discussion of when Communists, Anarchists and Socialists were working together both in Caballero's Government in Madrid and in Catalonia? Why do many, including the CNT anarchist supporters, ignore the Asturias' revolution of October 1934: savagely put down by General Franco, with whole mining communities, totalling 30,000 workers, tortured and imprisoned? Was it because the CNT in Madrid and Barcelona saw itself superior to the socialists of the UGT? Why is this Asturian working-class history being ignored in Britain?

'Afterwords' should be disturbing not comforting, and in welcoming this pamphlet I hope that some of my questions can be answered, and in the comradely Somerset spirit I ask them, by those more knowledgeable than myself. ●