

# The International Brigades in the Spanish War 1936-1939: Flags and Symbols

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"To my father"

Someone has described the presence of the international volunteers in the Spanish War 1936-1939 as the "last romantic war of the twentieth century". I think there are no such romantic wars. All wars are cruel.

In the pre-war theatre of the Second World War, the Spanish War was the training field for new military tactics: massive troop transport from Africa to Spain, intimidatory bombardments over civil targets, etc. These tactics were used in the following European confrontation: Sicily, Normandy, Coventry, Dresden...

The Spanish War was not only a "Civil War", but the confrontation and clash of ideas: defence of democracy against totalitarianism. This confrontation of ideas – IDEA > IDEAL > IDEALISM > IDEALISATION – fed the romantic flavour, of defence of ideals, that impregnated the majority of the "brigadists" who came from all around the world.

The "franquist" propaganda has shown the brigades as a part of International Communism. Without absolutely denying this question, it was more a communist effort to capitalise this action than the main motivation for the thousands of volunteers that joined the war defending these ideas. The Communist Party structure was used around the world, and they tried to capitalise the forms and commandments. It is also useful to remark that in those times, when fascist ideas were increasing, the intellectuals turned to the left, approaching the idyllic communist panacea. The Spanish Republic Government, isolated by the Non-intervention Committee, was obliged to accept, at high cost, weapons and equipment from Moscow.

My father was a brigadist; he never was a communist. He was a convinced democratic republican. His stories encouraged me to know more about the International Brigades and my passion for vexillology brought me to investigate their symbols and flags. The fruit of this work, whose starting point was the presentation of my friend Luis Sorando at the XIVth ICV in Madrid, fifteen years ago, is the presentation I'm offering you now.

## 1. Columns 1936

The first brigadists were in Barcelona in July 1936 before the military rebellion. They were athletes who accom-

panied people gathered in Barcelona to celebrate the *Olimpiada Popular* (Fig. 1), meeting organised by several leftist organisations to show their opposition to the official Olympic Games of Berlin. This "People's Olympiad", in which a young 18 year old athlete, Isaac Galan, who later would be registered as the father of my wife Anne, provided the first 300 brigadists who, organised in columns, immediately headed for the Aragon front.



Fig. 1

The first columns were organised in Barcelona, but there were also international groups in Madrid and Irun.

In Barcelona were formed:

- ◆ *Grupo Thaelmann*
- ◆ *Grupo Italiano*
- ◆ *Centuria Thaelmann*
- ◆ *Centuria Giustizia e Libertà*
- ◆ *Centuria Gastone-Sozzi*
- ◆ *Centuria Dombrowski*
- ◆ *Centuria Commune de Paris*
- ◆ *Centuria Inglesa Antifascista "Tom Mann"*
- ◆ *Centuria Dymitroff*
- ◆ *Grupo Rakosi*
- ◆ *Batallón de la Muerte o Batallón Malatesta*

The international groups in Irun were three:

- ◆ *Grupo Edgar André* (German people)
- ◆ *Grupo Wroblewski* (Polish, Francis Palka was its leader)
- ◆ *Grupo Gorizia* (the surname of its Italian leader, Remigio Maurovich)

In the Sierra of Madrid there was:

- ◆ *Grupo Fernando de Rosa* (Italian communists, Spanish nationalists)

Let's see which flags we know until now.

### 1.1. German Centuries

There were two German groups with the same name, but without any connection.

The Thaelmann group was made up of Jewish refugees, including three women volunteers, and led by Max Friedeman. The group of 11 people left Barcelona for the Aragon front on July 23. We don't know their symbols.

The second was a *centuria* organised by Hans Beimler, who came to the Pedralbes Barracks with his 15 German friends and one British (Sam Masters).

On August 30 they (60 people) left Barcelona for the Aragon front as the "31 Centuria de la Columna 19 de Julio" with the name of "Centuria Thaelmann"

We know a picture of the Pedralbes barracks showing a flag ~0.70 x 1.80m with letters probably white on a red field (Fig. 2)



Fig. 2

There is another picture that shows the mentioned flag as well as another with the name of the column (*Carlos Marx*), the *battalion* (19 July) and the *centuria* (*Thaelmann*) (Fig. 3)



Fig. 3

There is also another one documented (Fig. 4)



Fig. 4

On October 20 at the Tardienta fight, their flag-bearer, Willy Pukallus died; on October 22, the *centuria* went back to Barcelona where in the Carlos Marx Barracks it received an honour flag from the Central Committee of the P.S.U of Catalonia. This flag, received by the brothers Herald, Kay and Auge Nielsen (Danish volunteers arrived to Barcelona on the bike) is kept in an unknown place (Inf. Luis Sorando) (Fig. 5)



Fig. 5

The flag is ~ 60 x 73cm with the name of the quarter, the communist symbol and the numbers and names of the *centuria* and the *battalion*. This flag was used by the Thaelmann Battalion early in 1937, because it is on pictures of Hans Beimler's funeral in Barcelona (June 12, 1936).

Also a German poster, remembering Tardienta, shows another design (Fig. 6)



Fig. 6



The *Centuria Thaelmann* was integrated on October 25 into the *9ª Brigada Móvil*, which on November 1 took the name of *XI Brigada Mixta Internacional* commanded by General Emile Kléber.

**Ernst Thaelmann** (Hamburg, 1886 – Buchenwald, Turingia, 1944). Member of the Transport Workers Union, joined the Social Democrat Party in 1903. In 1920 was active in the German Revolution in Hamburg. In 1920 Thaelmann joined Walter Ulbricht, Erns Toller and Clara Zetkin to form the German Communist Party (KPD). Thaelmann was elected to the Reichstag in 1920 and was the party's presidential candidate in 1932; he received 13,2% of the votes against the 30,1 received by Hitler. In the wave of violence launched by the Nazi Party against the KPD and other opponents, Ernst Thaelmann was imprisoned (March 3 1933) and executed in Buchenwald on August 18th 1944.

## 1.2. Italian Centurias

In Barcelona, three Italian groups were formed. First a small one, 10 people, arrived on August 3, who went to the front from the Carlos Marx barracks into a *centuria* of the PSU youth.

On August 17, Mario Angeloni (republican), Carlo Rosselli (socialist), Umberto Calosso and Camillo Berneri (anarchist), wrote the act of birth of the Italian Column, led by Carlo Roselli. They were integrated in the Ascaso anarchist column on the Aragon front. This column of about 50 people is known also as the *Centuria Giustizia e Libertà*, like the name of the Italian Movement founded in France by Italian socialists and republicans from outside Italy. We do not know their flags.

Finally, also in Barcelona, on September 3, the *Centuria Gastone Sozzi* was formed by 86 Italians, 29 Poles, 10 French, some Belgians and one Dane; their captain was Gottardo Rinaldi and the political commissary was Francesco Leone. On September 9, integrated into the "Libertad" column, they moved from Barcelona to the Madrid front, defending the Extremadura route. On October 25, they made up the majority of the Garibaldi battalion of the 9th mixed brigade, from November 1, the XI International Brigade.

The flag is red with cut white letters sewn on the obverse (Fig. 7); the reverse is plain red. The Garibaldi battalion used this flag for several months, until they got their own.

In Madrid, the Socialist Party organised two battalions: "*Largo Caballero*" and "*Octubre*"; the October's commander was the Italian, Spanish nationalised socialist, Fernando De Rosa, who died in the Sierra of Guadarrama (September 16, 1936).



Fig. 7

**Gastone Sozzi** (? – February 7th, 1928). Italian communist formed by Comintern in Moscow between 1923 and 1925; died in the prison of Perugia.

## 1.3. English Antifascist Centuria Tom Mann

There is a picture taken in September 1936 where we can see, from left to right: Sid Avner, Nat Cohen, Ramona, Tom Winteringham, George Tioli, Jack Barry and David Marshall, and a big flag, perhaps we can talk of a poster, probably with white letters on a red field (Fig. 8).



Fig. 8

**Tom Mann** (1856-1941). He was a British syndicalist, acclaimed by common consent as the greatest labour agitator and orator of his time.

*"... The future of the world belongs to the youth of the world, and it is from the youth and not from the old that the fire of life will warm and enlighten the world... It is your privilege to breathe the breath of life into the dry bones of many around you... Go forth and achieve."*

Tom Mann: A.E.U. Journal, January 1921.

[www.wcml.org.uk/tom\\_mann.html](http://www.wcml.org.uk/tom_mann.html)

## 1.4. Centuria Dymitroff

As their flag says, it was the 38 *centuria* of the Carlos Marx column. The flag's size is about 1 x 1.5m. (Fig. 9)

They preserved this flag during several months, as the Dymitroff battalion flag.



Fig. 9

**Georgi Dimitrov** (Kovachevtsi, Bulgaria, 1882 - 1949). He became a printer and was an active trade unionist. Elected to parliament as a socialist, he campaigned against the country's involvement in the First World War.

In 1923 he led a failed communist uprising in Bulgaria. At his trial Dimitrov defended himself so effectively that he was acquitted.

In 1934, Dimitrov moved to the Soviet Union where he worked as secretary-general of Comintern. In September 1936 the Comintern began organising the formation of International Brigades.

With the help of the Soviet Union a communist government was established in Bulgaria after the Second World War. Georgi Dimitrov became Prime Minister until his death on 2 July 1949.

### 1.5. The Rakosi Group

Formed by Hungarian people. Came out to the Aragon front integrated into the "Columna de Ferro".

In April 1937 they entered the "Carlos Marx" battalion.

This flag is ~1.20 x 1.40m, white (or gold?) over red (Fig. 10).



Fig. 10

**Matyas Rakosi** (Ada 1892 - Gorki 1972). Formed the Hungarian Communist Party, together with Bela Kun. In 1919 he emigrated to Austria and Moscow. He was one of the secretaries of the Comintern (1921-1924). Arrested in Hungary in 1925, he was condemned to hard labour for life. Changed in 1940 by some flags captured in 1849 by the Tzar troops in Hungary! In 1945 he came back to Hungary. Vice-President of the Council (1945), General Secretary of the Communist Party (1948-1956) and President of the Council (1952-1953). With the change against Stalin he was withdrawn from the Party (1956) and went to the USSR. Rakosi died in 1972.

### 1.6. Italian Anarchists

The *Batallón de la Muerte* or *Centuria Malatesta* was the best known and spectacular international anarchist column. Formed by Italians, exiled in France, in their parade in Barcelona (March 3, 1937) they caused a great impression because of their uniforms, like fascist ones.

Vicente Guarner, Chief of the Aragon Army from March 1937, in his book "Cataluña en la Guerra de España" (Ed. G. del Toro) gives us his impression of the anarchists columns "Giustizia e Libertá" and the "Batallón de la Muerte". He explains that they were trained in a "Masia" of Sant Adrià de Besós; equipped and financed by the *Generalitat* through petition of Diego Abad de Santillán and commanded by Camillo Berneri. They entered in battle with failure in Almudevar and Montalban; and in the assault to the Santa Quiteria chapel, they were annihilated.

Guarner says that the rests of the battalion were incorporated in the Garibaldi and the Ascaso Division and others to cross the border to France.

They used two flags ~ 1 x 1m (Figs. 11 and 12) the letters UHP are the capital letters of an anarchist motto: "Unidos, Hermanos Proletarios".



Fig. 11



Fig. 12



Luis Sorando gave me a picture that shows Italian communists of the 5º Regimiento. Their flags are unknown (Fig. 13).



Fig. 13

### 1.7. German Anarchists

Also Luis Sorando gave me this reproduction of a flag with the three-pointed star of the International Brigades and the word “ROTFRONT” over the anarchist colours (Fig. 14). What does it mean? I don't know.



Fig. 14

## 2. INTERNATIONAL BRIGADES

On September 21, Maurice Thorez, Secretary General of the French Communist Party, initiated the idea of an international force of one brigade of 5,000 volunteers. After the Moscow agreement, in September 1936 the *Commintern* began to recruit people. The most important recruiting centre was Paris. The headquarters and training centre were placed in Albacete, because it was there that the 5º *Regimiento* (communist militia) had several facilities.

On October 22, 1936, the Government of the Republic approved the constitution of the International Brigades.

The same day, the German battalion “Edgar André” (also known as Hans Battalion, by the name of its first

commander Hans Kahle), the French battalion “*La Commune de Paris*” and the Italian “Garibaldi” made up the “9ª *Brigada Móvil*”.

On November 1, 1936, by decision of the President of the Council of Ministers, Largo Caballero, the “9ª *Brigada Móvil*” changed into the XI International Brigade, under the commandment of general Emile Kleber.

Until September 23, 1938, when Juan Negrín, head of the Republican government, announced at the League of Nations that the International Brigades would be unilaterally withdrawn from Spain, they were organised in seven brigades:

- ◆ XI IB, *Thaelmann or Hans Beimler*
- ◆ XII IB, *Garibaldi*
- ◆ XIII IB, *Dombrowski*
- ◆ XIV IB, *La Marseillaise*
- ◆ XV IB, *Lincoln*
- ◆ 129 IB, *Europa Central*
- ◆ 150 IB, *Dombrowski*

There was an ephemeral brigade,

- ◆ XIV bis IB,

and also the

- ◆ “86 *Brigada Mixta*” could be considered “international” from January 1938.

Concerning the Brigade flags before October 31, 1937 we do not know if they follow the general pattern of the Republic's Army (Fig. 15). There are several pictures that show brigade flags as the Republic's colours with the Brigades symbol: the red three pointed star; was this a pattern for International Brigade flags? Perhaps (Figs. 16-17).



Fig. 15



Fig. 16



Fig. 17

On October 31, 1937, as a gift on the first anniversary of the International Brigades, General Miaja gave to the existing brigades: XI, XII, XIII, XIV and XV, a flag of a new design: on the obverse, over the republican tricolour there is the “*Emblema Antifascista de Madrid*” and on the reverse the red three-pointed star and the motto “*El Frente popular de Madrid – El Frente popular del Mundo*”.

### Divisions

Because of the war’s development several divisions were organised with international brigades and other forces of the People’s Army:

- Kleber Division: Nov. 20, 1936 – Feb. 4, 1937
- Luckács Division: Feb. 28, 1936 – Jan. 6, 1937
- A Division: Feb. 15, 1937 – May 29, 1973
- B Division: Feb. 15, 1937 – Jul. 3, 1937
- 15 Division: Jul. 4, 1937 – Aug. 4, 1937
- 35 Division: May 30, 1937 – Oct. 23, 1938
- 45 Division: Mar. 31, 1937 – Sep. 25, 1938

We do not have any information about the International Divisions’ Flags; if any of these divisions had had their own flag, perhaps they could have been similar to the flag of the 11 Division offered by the workers of the “V” factory. This flag is preserved today by the PCE (Communist Party of Spain) in Madrid (Fig. 18).



Fig. 18

### XI IB, Thaelmann or Hans Beimler

Formed on October 22, 1936 in Albacete with the battalions Edgar André, *Commune de Paris* and Garibaldi. Its first composition was Germans, French, Poles, Italians and Yugoslavs. Afterwards, there was a German majority

From the Jarama Battle they took the name of Thaelmann and from July 1937 they were known as Hans Beimler.

It was demobilised on September 22, 1937. On February 9, 1939, they crossed the French border.

Their flag, kept in the former GDR is of “first anniversary” model with the particularity that it does not carry the name of the brigade before the disc with the number (Fig. 19).



Fig. 19

**Hans Beimler (1895-1936):** German volunteer. Communist deputy to the Reichstag; condemned to death by the nazis, achieved to escape from Dachau. On July 23 he organised the Thaelmann centuria in Barcelona. He died on December 1 1936 on the Madrid front, being commissary of the Thaelmann battalion and of the whole German brigade.

### XII IB, Garibaldi

Formed on November 1, 1936 in Madrigueras (Albacete) with the Italians of the Garibaldi battalion and the survivors of the Roselli and Gastone Sozzi columns, the Germans of the Thaelmann battalion and a French-Belgian battalion named André Marty afterwards; in total about 1600 people of predominantly anarchist ideology. From July 1937 they took the name of Garibaldi Brigade.

Demobilised on September 23, 1938, they were quartered in La Garriga, reorganised the brigade and together crossed the border on February 2, 1939.

Their flag is of the model sent by the City of Madrid (Fig. 20).



Fig. 20



### XIII IB, Dombrowski

Formed in December 1936 between the towns of Tarazona de la Mancha, Mahora, Villanueva de la Jara and Quintanar del Rey. In their first composition they contained the battalions Louise Michel, Tschapaiev, Henri Vuillemin and a Balkan company.

Demobilised on September 22, 1938; they were reorganised on January 23, 1939, in La Garriga, under the commandment of the Polish Torunczyk and on February 2, 1939, they crossed the border.

### XIV IB, La Marseillaise

Formed on December 2, 1936 in Albacete with the battalions Sans Nom o Des Neuf Nationalités, Vaillant-Couturier, La Marseillaise and Henri Barbuse.

Demobilised on September 23, 1938.

### XIV bis IB,

Organised by Dumont on November 27, 1937, when being the chief of the XIV IB, he wanted to be a General. The Henri Vuillemin, Pierre Brachet and *Six Février* battalions built this new XIV bis IB. On February 23, 1938 all forces were reintegrated into the XIV IB.

### XV IB. Lincoln

Formed on January 1, 1937 in Mahora with two groups, first, the Anglo-Saxon formed by the Lincoln, British and Washington battalions, and the second, the Latin-Slave, with the Spanish, Galindo, *Six Février* and Dimitrov battalions.

In August 1937 Galindo left and two others entered: George Washington and the Canadian "Mac-Paps".

On September 22, it was demobilised; nevertheless, the next day they were fighting. In January 1939 they were reorganised, crossing the border through Le Perthus on February 7, 1939.

The flag of Fig. 21 seems to be of the obligatory model, but is different from the other shown in a picture taken in Quinto after the battle at Fuentes de Ebro in October, 1937 (Fig. 22).



Fig. 21



Fig. 22

### 129 IB, Central Europe or of the 40 Nations

Reorganised as International Brigade on February 8, 1938 in Chillón, and formed by the Dimitrov, Djure Djakovich and Masaryk battalions. After the demobilisation it was reorganised in Las Planas, the 129 IB was present in the defence of Vic and afterwards crossed the border.

### 150 IB, Dombrowski

Ephemeral IB created on May 27, 1937 with the battalions Dombrowski, Rakosi, André Marty and Palafox.

On August 4, 1937 it was eliminated, the Dombrowski, Rakosi and Palafox battalions moving into the XIII IB, and the André Marty into the XII IB.

### 86 Brigada Mixta

In March 1937, this brigade was created from the "*Brigada Móvil de Puertollano*" (three Spanish battalions) plus the 20 International Battalion. In January 1938, this battalion was unfolded into three: 20, 21, and 22 international battalions remaining only one single Spanish battalion, the Pablo Iglesias. Then, from this time, in the 86 Mixed Brigade there were 2,338 interbrigadists and, therefore, they have to be considered an International Brigade. The internationals were withdrawn on October 1, 1938. We do not know anything about their flags.

## 3. BATTALIONS

On October 31, 1937, in the same act commemorating the first anniversary of the International Brigades, the City of Madrid gave a silk pennant to the existing battalions. These pennants did not have any success; the battalions continued using their own flags; the pennant's size is 37 x 85cm.

These pennants were sent to the battalions: Hans Beimler, Edgar André, *12 Février* and Thaelmann, of the XI IB; Garibaldi, André Marty and perhaps the three Italo-Spanish, of the XII IB; Rakosi, Dombrowski and Palafox, of the XIII IB; *Commune de Paris*, Domingo Germinal, *La Marseillaise* and Henri Barbuse, of the XIV IB; and Lincoln, British and Mackenzie Papineau, of the XV IB.

There pennant of the Palafox battalion was preserved and we have pictures of the one of the British battalion.

Let's make an overview about flags used by International Battalions. Their order is, more or less, according to the date of organisation and/or the number assigned in the International Brigades.

### Nº 1. - Edgar André (28/10/1936 – 23/9/1938)

Germans, Balkanics, Slaves, Scandinavians and Flemish.

### Nº 2. - Commune de Paris (was the Nº 9 when they went into the XIV IB) (22/10/1936 – 25/9/1938)

French and Belgians plus English and Americans.

Formed in October 1936. The old Centuria of the same name was its machine-gun section. It was integrated in the XI IB until April 1937 when they passed into the XIV IB and on September 8, 1938 into the XII IB. Demobilised on September 25.

In the Army Museum of Madrid, the flag is preserved, sent to this battalion by the communists from Espinardo (Murcia) in January 1937. When the battalion had a rest period there. It is made on red silk with gold ribbon and white letters. On the obverse it shows the republican tricolour in vertical stripes (?) (Fig. 23).



Fig. 23

The “Commune de Paris” Battalion achieved the “*Medalla al Valor*” because of their act in Camp-Redó in the night of June 25th-26th, 1938 (D.O. Nº 208 of August 16, 1938).

### Nº 3. - Garibaldi (29/10/1936 – 25/10/1938)

Italians, Swiss from Ticino and citizens from San Marino.

Their origin was an agreement signed in Paris on October 27, 1936 between republicans, socialists and communists to form an “Italian Antifascist Legion”. This legion, commanded by the republican Randolfo Pacciardi, received the name of Garibaldi and was integrated into the XII IB. This battalion had four companies: Louis de Bosis, Mario Angeloni, Gastone Sozzi and Fernando De Rosa.

Their flag is shown in a picture b/w, but probably, is red with white letters and the italian tricolor in the canton (Fig. 24).



Fig. 24

### Nº 4. – Dombrowski (19/10/1936 – 23/9/1938)

Polish, Hungarians, Czechs, Slovaks, Yugoslavs, Ukrainians and Bulgarians.

Formed in October 1936, it first moved into the XI IB and afterwards it was included into the XII, 150 and XIII.

Their flag is a present of the Polish Communist Party, received in May 1937. It is 1.30 x 1.88 m; red with white letters, the republican tricolour to the fly and the motto of the Polish people in 1830: “*Por vuestra libertad y la nuestra*” (Fig. 25).



Fig. 25

There is another flag with the text: “ZAWASZA I NASZA WOLNOSC / DABROWSZCZACY – CZECHOSLOWACKIM OCHOTNIKOM / VOLNOSCI”, over the Czech colours (Fig. 26). It is a banner dedicated from the Polish brigadists to the Czech ones.



Fig. 26

### Jaroslav Dombrowski (Jitomir, 1836 – Paris, 1871)

Officer of the Russian tsar’s army. Imprisoned for participation in a plot against the tsar’s absolutism in 1863, was deported to Siberia; evaded, went to France. In 1871 he became the commander-in-chief of the French Paris Commune. Died over the barricades.

### Nº 5. – Thaelmann (10/11/1936 – 23/9/1938)

German, Poles, Hungarians, 18 British, and some Scandinavians and Balkans and more, until 11 nationalities.

Formed from October 28, 1936 in Albacete; the old Thaelmann Centuria was its machine-gun company.

Integrated into the XII IB, on December 15, they passed to the XI IB until their demobilisation.



Concerning their flags, until early 1937 they used the flag of the old Thaelmann Centuria given by the Catalan PSU (Fig. 27).



Fig. 27

In 1937 (that year in on the flag) the French Thaelmann Committee sent a new flag of red silk, gold ribbon, white letters and the picture of “La Marseillaise”. This flag is preserved in an unknown place (Fig. 28).



Fig. 28

**N° 6. - André Marty [Franco-Belga] (from May 1938, N° 12) (10/11/1936 - 25/9/1938)**

French and Belgians.

**N° 7. - Louis Michel I (absorbed by the XI IB in July 1936)**

**N° 8. - Tchapaief [Veintiuna Naciones] (18/11/36 – 5/8/37)**

Germans, Balkans, the Polish company “Adam Mickiewicz”, another Yugoslavian company, etc; until 21 nationalities.

Formed in December 1936, their flag has a gold text over red field with a gold fringe (Fig. 29).



Fig. 29

**Tchapaief:** Is the central personage of the film with the same name which was very successful among the brigadists (I don't know if the personage is real): A very short educated, non-commissioned officer of the tsar army, during the revolution he commanded a troupe of Ukranian partisans; gifted with natural intelligence and commanding talents, he achieved great success. It is then, when relaxed, he takes less precautions and betrayed by a spy, he dies, but through his death he shows the others to be better and in the end, the Revolution will be victorious.

**N° 9. - Sans Nom o Des Neuf Nationalites (15/12/1936 – 16/1/1937)**

Balkans, Germans and Poles.

**N° 9. - Italiano (absorbed by the Garibaldi Battalion on 9/12/1936) (25/11/1936 – 9/12/1936)**

**N° 10. - Vaillant-Couturier [Domingo Germinal] (2/12/36 – 10/38)**

French and Belgians, Czechs, Bulgarians and Scandinavians.

**N° 10. - Henri Vuillemin (from Oct 37, Num. 11; in the XIVbis, Num 14) (30/11/1936 – 22/4/1938)**

French people.

**N° 11. - Louis Michel II: absorbed by Henri Vuillemin on 27/1/1937 (11/1936 – 27/1/1937)**

**N° 11. - Mickiewicz (4/10/1937 – 22/9/1938)**

Polish.

Formed on October 4, 1937 from the Adam Mickiewicz Company created on November 18, 1936 into the Tchapaiev battalion; became the 4th battalion of the XIII Brigade and took part in several battles around the city of Madrid.



Fig. 30

The Mickiewick Battalion achieved the “*Medalla al Valor*” together with the three other battalions of the XIII IB (Rakosi, Dombrowski and Palafox) and batteries Liebknecht and Glowacki (D.O. N° 225 of September 2, 1938.

**Adam Mickiewick (1798-1851):** A Polish romantic poet who began his literary career in his country. A fighter for the independence of his country, in the revolutionary period of 1848, he organised the “Polish legion” to fight against Austria. In 1855, at the occasion of the Crimea war, he organised in Turkey a corps of Polish volunteers against Russia. He died, victim of cholera.

**N° 12. - La Marseillaise [Ralph Fox from 5/1937) (10/12/1936 – 23/2/1938)**

French and British.

**N° 13. - Henry Barbusse (11/1936 – 25/10/1938)**

French.

**N° 14. - Pierre Brachet (Num. 16 when it was in the XIVbis) (1/10/1937 – 22/4/1938)**

**N° 15. - Six Fevrier (1/2/37 – 22/4/38)**

French and Belgians plus Algerians, Morrocans, and people from Tangier, Greeks, Syrians, Chinese and Hungarians

**N° 16. - British Battalion [Saklatvala o Redford) (28/12/1936 – 23/10/1938)**

British, Irish, Cypriots, Australians, Jamaicans, North Americans, Latin-Americans and Scandinavians.

Formed in Madrigueras in January 1937. There were around 2000 volunteers in the whole Spanish War fighting in the British battalion.

They got a flag sent by the London Workers (Fig. 31). There are also pictures of their battalion pennant held up by Major Frank West Spring 1937 (Fig. 32).



Fig. 31



Fig. 32

**Shapurji Saklatvala (1874 - 1936):** Shapurji Saklatvala is said to have been the most radical Indian involved in British politics. He fought hard for the rights of the British working class and for the national liberation of India from British rule.

Born in Bombay, he came to England in 1905 and was an active member of the Communist Party until he died in 1936.

He won a seat in Parliament for the Labour Party in 1922, lost it in 1923, and regained it again in 1924 as a communist candidate. He was very popular with the working class people of the time.

**N° 17. - Lincoln [Lincoln-Washington between 7/37 and 9/37] (8/1/1937 – 23/9/1938)**

People from the USA and Canada, plus China and Japan.

The first volunteers sailed from New York City on December 25, 1936.

It was incorporated into the XV IB on January 31, 1937. Because of the casualties suffered in Brunete, the Lincoln and the Washington battalions were merged into one that took the name of Lincoln-Washington; in September it recovered its single name, Lincoln.

Demobilised on September 23, 1938, they crossed the border on February 2, 1939.

In their parades in Barcelona (January 6, 1937) and Valencia (January 8, 1937) they showed a red flag with white letters (Fig. 33).



Fig. 33

There is also a “*pancarta*”, not a flag, carried in these parades (Fig. 34) that someone take as a blue flag.





Fig. 34

There was another flag sent to the unit in Barcelona in the last months of 1937, tricolour with white letters, ~1 x 1.30m. (Fig. 35). Their last commander, Milton Wolff, preserves this flag.



Fig. 35

A recent film of the war, with original images, shows a Lincoln's battalion flag. We are not sure if it is a battalion or a company flag; it is a triband R-W-R with a B triangle at the hoist charged by W stars and black letters over the white stripe. We show a reconstruction sketch from Luis Sorando. This flag is also in the memory of my father-in-law when, 18/19 years old, he went into the medical services of the Lincoln battalion. (Fig. 36)

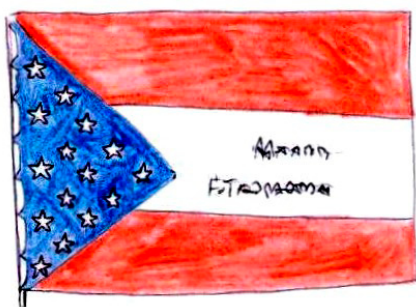


Fig. 36

#### Nº 18. - Dimitrov [Doce Lenguas] (31/1/1937 – 5/10/1938)

Czechs, Bulgarians, Hungarians, Rumanians, Greeks and Yugoslavians, plus Poles, Germans, Austrians, Italians, etc. until 12 languages.

Formed from the old Dimitrov column, it was integrated into the XV IB on January 31, 1937. It is said that one of its commanders was Josip Broz, Tito.

Their flag is red with gold letters, the three-pointed star and gold fringe (Fig. 37)



Fig. 37

#### Nº 20. - Veinte (15/2/37 - 30/6/37)

French, British, Irish, North Americans, Cubans, and Mexicans, from Puerto Rico, and Germans and Austrians.

#### Washington: (February 1937 – July 12, 1937)

Formed in Madrigueras between February and June 13, 1937 with the new North-Americans arrived to Spain. This battalion was annihilated in the Brunete battle (July 12, 1937), and the survivors joint with the Lincoln battalion, with also several injured, formed the Lincoln-Washington battalion.

#### Mackenzie-Papineau [Mac-Paps, Patrik Henry, Thomas Paine or Canadian Battalion] (5/1937 – 15/10/1938)

Canadians and North Americans.

Established in July 1937 as a battalion from the Lincoln's unofficial Canadian section called the Mackenzie-Papineaus; the group immediately nicknamed itself Mac-Paps.



Fig. 38



Fig. 38 (cont.)



Fig. 39

**William Lyon Mackenzie** (Dundee, Scotland, 1795 - Toronto, 1861): Mackenzie left his homeland for Canada in 1820. He arrived in Montréal, and after working on the Lachine Canal and as a journalist for the Montreal Herald, he settled in York (now Toronto).

Mackenzie began his public life in 1824 when he founded the *Colonial Advocate*, a reform paper that openly criticized the Family Compact. The same year, he moved his paper to Toronto, where his popularity soared. Mackenzie was elected to the legislature for the first time in 1828, representing York. There, he demanded reforms in the areas of agriculture, commerce and the post. His meeting with President Andrew Jackson during a trip to the United States in 1829 was a defining moment in Mackenzie's ideological development. He returned to Upper Canada filled with admiration for the American government, and became increasingly wary of British colonialism. W. L. Mackenzie led the Rebellion of 1837 in Upper Canada, fighting the oligarchy of the Family Compact. His involvement forced him into exile in the United States until 1849, when the government of United Canada offered the rebels amnesty. He resigned his seat in Parliament in 1858. He died in comparative poverty, in Toronto, in August 1861.

**Louis-Joseph Papineau** (1786-1871): In June 1808, he became a member of the Assembly for Kent (Chambly). He was admitted to the Bar of Lower Canada on May 3, 1810. In 1814, he was elected in the riding of Montreal East as a substitute for his father. He represented this riding in the House of Assembly until March 1832.

He was Speaker of the House of Assembly from 1815 to 1823 and from 1825 to 1832. With his forceful interventions in the House and his popularity as a powerful speaker, Louis-Joseph Papineau became the champion of the nationalist movement.

As leader of the Canadian Party, which later became the Patriot Party, he made an important speech in the House of Assembly on February 28, 1834, on the Ninety-two Resolutions. London responded to these requests with the Russell resolutions, which reached Canada three years later. Their terms only swelled the discontent, and rebellion took shape. Armed uprisings broke out.

In 1836, warrants were issued for the arrest of Louis-Joseph Papineau and the other main leaders of the Patriot movement. On December 12, a proclamation was made offering \$4000 to anyone who brought Papineau to justice. He sought refuge in Albany, New York, where he stayed for two years. He moved to Paris in 1839, and stayed there for almost four years. When he returned to the colony, Papineau was granted amnesty thanks to the influence of Louis-Hippolyte La Fontaine. He was re-elected to the Parliament of United Canada in January 1848 as the Member for Saint-Maurice. In 1852, he was elected member for Deux-Montagnes. Papineau retired from politics in 1854. He died at 85 years of age.



**Thomas Paine** (Thetford, Norfolk, England, 1737-New York, 1809): Thomas Paine was an American Founding Father. Son of a Quaker, after a short basic education, he started to work, at first for his father, later as an officer of the excise. During this occupation Thomas Paine was an unsuccessful man, and was twice dismissed from his post. In 1774, he met Benjamin Franklin in London, who advised him to emigrate to America, giving him letters of recommendation.

Paine landed in Philadelphia on November 30, 1774. Starting over as a publicist, he first published his African Slavery in America, in the spring of 1775, criticising slavery in America as being unjust and inhumane. On arriving in Philadelphia, Paine had sensed the rise of tension, and the spirit of rebellion, that had steadily mounted in the Colonies after the Boston Teaparty. In Paine's view the Colonies had all the right to revolt against a government, for him there was no reason for the Colonies to stay dependent on England. On January 10, 1776 Paine formulated his ideas on American independence in his pamphlet Common Sense. Due to the many copies sold (500,000) Paine's influence on the Declaration of Independence of July 4, 1776 is eminent. During the War of Independence Paine volunteered in the Continental Army. In 1777 he became Secretary of the Committee of Foreign Affairs in Congress, but already in 1779 he was forced to resign because he had disclosed secret information. In the following nine years he worked as a clerk at the Pennsylvania Assembly and published several writings. In 1787 Thomas Paine left for England, initially to raise funds for the building of a bridge he had designed, but after the outbreak of the French Revolution he became deeply involved in it. Though a true republicanist, he was imprisoned in 1793 under Robespierre, because he had voted against the execution of the dethroned King Louis XVI.

After his release he stayed in France until 1802, when he sailed back to America, after an invitation by Thomas Jefferson who had met him before when he was minister in Paris and who admired him. Back in the United States he learned that he was seen as a great infidel, or simply forgotten for what he had done for America.

**Patrik Henry** (1736-1799): He was a prominent figure during the era of the American Revolution. In the opinion of most historians (and most of his contemporaries), he was one of, if not the most radical politician of the period. Trained as an attorney, and noted for his heated oratorical skills. Henry was elected to the House of Burgesses (legislative body of the Virginia colony) in 1765. That same year, he proposed the Virginia Stamp Act Resolutions. It was possibly the most anti-British (many called it "treasonous") American political action to that point, and some credit the Resolutions with being one of the main catalysts of the Revolution. Henry is perhaps best known for the closing words of a speech he made in the House of Burgesses on March 23, 1775, urging that legislature to take military action against the encroaching British military force:

Is life so dear, or peace so sweet, as to be purchased at the price of chains and slavery? Forbid it, Almighty God! I know not what course others may take; but as for me, give me liberty or give me death!"

During the Revolution, Henry led a military force in defense of Virginia, chiefly in defense of some disputed gunpowder coveted by the British.

After the Revolution, Henry was an outspoken critic of the Constitution and urged against its adoption, arguing it gave the federal government too much power. He served as the first Governor of Virginia, from 1776-79, and again from 1784-86. He died at Red Hill Plantation, Virginia.

**Nº 21. - Galindo (14/3/1937 - 10/11/1937)**

Spanish people.

**Nº 24. - Español (5/4/1937 - 23/9/1938)**

Hispano-Americans.

**Rakosi (12/4/1937 - 22/9/1938)**

Hungarians and Czechs, Tartarians from Turkestan, Ukrainians and Poles.

**Italoespañol (2nd of the XII IB) (1/5/1937 - 25/9/1938)**

Italians.

**Italoespañol [Figlio] (3rd of the XII IB) (1/5/1937 - 25/9/1938)**

Italians.

**Hans Beimler (May 1937 - 23/10/1938)**

People from Austria, Switzerland and Scandinavia.

**Zwofte Februar (June 37 – 19/10/38)**

Volunteers from Austria, Germany and Scandinavia.

**Djure Djakovic o Deda Blagoiev (June 1937 – 5/10/1938)**

Yugoslavians and Czechs.

**N° 40. - Palafox (4/8/1937 – 22/10/1938)**

Poles, Ukrainians, Hungarians and French.

The Polish majority decided the name of the battalion: "Palafox", in order to clean the stain of the Polish people in the Napoleon army in Zaragoza.

Their pennant is preserved by the Militaria Arganzuela, Madrid (Fig. 40).



Fig. 40

In December 1937 their 2nd company was formed by Jewish people, under the name of Naftali Botwin (a Polish Jew who was executed in 1925, after having eliminated a phyla-fascist spy). Poles, Ukrainians, White Russians and Hungarians composed this company; they had their own banner, newspaper and anthem in Yiddish, their official language. Their banner had inscribed on it in Spanish, Yiddish, and Polish, "Company Naftali Botwin. For Our and Your Freedom."

It is said that the last casualty of the International Brigades was a component of this Jewish company: Haskel Honigstein, who died on October 4, 1938.

**José Palafox** (Zaragoza 1776 – Madrid 1847): Aragon military who assumed the defense of twice seated Zaragoza by the French troops (1808-1809).

**Italoespañol (4° de la XII) (10/1937 – 25/9/1938)****Masaryk (30/12/1937 – 5/10/1938)**

Czechs and some Polish.

Formed in December 1937 it was the reserve battalion of the 45th division, later passing to the 29 BI. He covered the retreat of the army in Aragon and Catalonia. Crossed the border on 9 February 1939.

Their flag was a republican tricolour with white letters (Fig. 41).



Fig. 41

**Tomás Masaryk** (Göding, Bohemia 1850 – Lány, Bohemia 1937): Czech politician, cathedatic of philosophy at the Prague University. In 1900 he was one of the founders of the Czech popular party which fought for the autonomy against the Austrian-Hungarian empire. Once the independence obtained of the Czech state, he was elected president of the Republic 1918-1935.

**Divisionario de la 35 DI****Checo-balcánico [or Divisionary of the 45 DI) (3/1938 – 25-10-1938)****Non identified Polish Unit**

We could be talking about a flag that would be identified with the totality of the Polish brigades and not to a determined company or battalion; though, the presence of a republican tie indicates that indeed it is a flag of the unit.

Luis Sorando describes it "of red trimmed silk with gold fringe, measures approximately 1.40 x 2.15m. It shows in the centre a huge emblem formed by the red three point star, trimmed with fine lively golden, on whose vertex there is a white circle which inside it has a sky-blue semi-circle with the map of Spain and a clenched fist and at the bottom a red five point star on a golden sun. In the upper part of the cloth a motto in Polish *JEDNOSE LUDU PRACULACEGO TOSMIERE FASZISMU!* (The union of the working people is the thumb of fascism!) in white letters. It wears a republican three-colour tie with golden edge" (Fig. 42).



Fig. 42



## Spanish Battalions

There were some Spanish battalions incorporated in short periods into the International Brigades:

- ◆ *Astúrias Heredia* (28/XI/36 – 7/XII/36 into the XI IB)
- ◆ *Juan Marco* (1/IV/37 – 5/VIII/37 into the XIII IB)
- ◆ *Madrid* (14/I/37 – 31/I/37 into the XI IB)
- ◆ *Madrid-2* (17/I/37 – 8/III/37 into the XII IB)
- ◆ *Otumba* (1/IV/37 – 5/VIII/37 into the XIII IB)
- ◆ *Pacífico* (14/I/37 – 31/I/37 into the XI IB)
- ◆ *Pasionaria* (III/37, Guadalajara battle, into the XI IB)

## 4. COMPANIES

Among the more than two hundred companies existing in the International Brigades, probably all of them with specific flags, we know only three: The British “Major Attlee Company”, the Irish “Connolly”, and the North American “Tom Mooney”.

### 4.1. Major Attlee

It was the 1st company of the British Battalion. Early December 1937, Clement Attlee, Ellen Wilkinson and Philip Noel-Baker, leaders of the British Labour Party, visited the British Battalion; from this time, their first company took the name of Major Attlee.

In the XV IB newsletter, there is information about this company and their flag, a gift of the London workers: *MAJOR ATLEE PRESENT WHEN COMPANY HONORS HIS NAME*

#### *English Battalion Gets Banner*

*The ties of solidarity between the democratic people of Britain and the members of the British Battalion in Spain were further strengthened by the presentation of colours to the 57th (English) Battalion as the gift of the London workers.*

*An impressive Battalion parade was reviewed by Brigade Commander, Lieutenant Copi, Brigade Commissar Dave Doran, Chief-on Staff Major Merriman and Bill Rush, British working class leader, who brought and presented the banner.*

...  
About this flag there are a lot of pictures but, nobody says if the letters are white or gold on a, probably, red field (Fig. 43).

**Clement Richard Attlee** (London 1883 – 1967): British politician. Labour deputy as from 1922. Was a part of the MacDonald government (1929-1931). Entered in the coalition government of Churchill 1940-1945. Head of the Labour Party, became Prime Minister after winning the elections of 1945. Maintained himself in the job until 1951 when he was defeated by the Conservatives of Winston Churchill. Was the head of the opposition till 1955 when he retired from active politics. In 1956 the Queen made him an Earl.



Fig. 43

## 4.2. Connolly Column

The Connolly Column was the Irish Section of the 1st Company (Guiteras-Connolly) of the XV IB. Organised in Ireland by the Irish socialist Peadar O'Donnell, they got the name of this socialist hero, James Connolly. In December 1936, Frank Ryan and 80 volunteers arrived to Spain; the majority came from the Free State but there was also a group of socialists from Belfast.

We know their flag through the pictures of the celebration of the 60th anniversary of the creation of the International Brigades. Because of the excellent condition of this flag I suppose it is a reconstruction of the original one (Fig. 44).



Fig. 44

**James Connolly** (Edinburgh 1868 - 1916) He joined the British Army and served in Ireland. He deserted in 1889 and returned to Scotland.

Connolly became a socialist and in 1896 moved to Dublin as an organiser of the Dublin Socialist Society. Later he founded the Irish Socialist Republican Party. In 1902 Connolly returned to Edinburgh. He immigrated to the USA in 1903 and established the Irish Socialist Federation and the newspaper, "*The Harp*". In 1910 Connolly returned to Dublin where he joined the Socialist Party of Ireland. In 1912 Connolly and James Larkin established the Irish Labour Party. By 1913 the Irish Transport and General Workers' Union had 10,000 members and had secured wage increases for most of its members. Attempts to prevent workers from joining the ITGWU in 1913 led to a lockout. Connolly returned to Dublin to help the union in its struggle with the employers. This included the formation of the Irish Citizen Army.

During the Eastern Rising, Connolly's Irish Citizen Army fought alongside the Irish Volunteers. Connolly served in the General Post Office during the fighting and was severely wounded. James Connolly was executed on 9 May 1916.

## 4.3. Tom Mooney

The Tom Mooney was the machine-gun company of the Lincoln battalion. Their flag is documented from a picture and also we are not sure about the colour field, red (probably) or blue, and letters and machine-gun in white or gold? (Fig. 45)

**Tom Mooney** (Chicago, December 8th, 1882 - March 6th, 1942).

Mooney's father was a coal miner who died of tuberculosis at the age of 36. In 1908 Mooney joined the Socialist Party of America. He married Rena Hermann in 1911 and became the publisher of "*The Revolt*", a socialist newspaper in San Francisco. In July he was arrested with his wife and others, in relation with the bomb that went off in San Francisco on July 22nd, 1916, when employers organised a march through the streets in favour of an improvement in national defence.

Mooney was sentenced to death and billings to life-imprisonment. There were protests all over the world and President Woodrow Wilson called on William Stephens, the Governor of California, to look again at the case. Two weeks before Mooney was scheduled to hang, Stephens commuted his sentence to life imprisonment in San Quentin. Soon afterwards Mooney wrote to Stephens: "I prefer a glorious death at the hands of my traducers, you included, to a living grave." In November 1938 Culbert Olson (Democratic Party) was elected as Governor of California. Soon Olson ordered that Mooney should be released from prison. A crowd of 25,000 greeted Mooney in San Francisco. He was a sick man and a month after being released from prison he had an emergency operation to remove his gallbladder. For the next two years he had three more operations and spent most of his time in hospital. Tom Mooney died on March 6th, 1942.



Fig. 45a





Fig 45b

## 5. BATERIAS

There was a total of 21 International Batteries; from them we only know one flag: the Gottwald anti-flight battery.

### 5.1. Gottwald

This was an anti-flight battery, created in January 1937 and formed by Czechs, Slovaks and Yugoslavians. Demobilised on September 25, 1938, after having shot down 51 aeroplanes.

Their standard was a gift of the “*siderurgia*” of Sagunto workers’ in May 1938. Now it is in the Military Museum of Prague and on the front side, over the republican tricolours, in white letters, is the text: “*Los obreros de la siderúrgica de Sagunto a la 17 Batería DECA*” (Fig. 46).



Fig. 46

**Klement Gottwald** (Dedice, Moravia 1896 – Praga 1953): Czech politician. Militant of the social democrat and of the communist party ever since its foundation (1921). Secretary of the Czech communist party, he went to the USSR (1938-1945). At his return he was president of the counsel (1946) and organised (1948) the coup that gave the power to the Communists President of the Republic between 1948 and 1953.

## 6. BASE Y ESCUELAS

Apart from the Base of Albacete, the international brigades organised the Superior Military School and the School of Officers of Pozorrubio which, probably, had their own flags.

### 6.1. Base Albacete

The General Headquarters of the International Brigades was seated in Albacete, because of the premises disposed there by the communist “5º Regimiento”. Afterwards, in April they moved to Barcelona to a villa in Horta and on the Tibidabo mountain.

The flag of the “Base. Estado Mayor. Albacete” was paid by a people’s subscription, and sent to them in October 1937. It is almost square ~1x1 m; in the obverse there was a big red five-pointed star and text and fringe in gold; the reverse was different: star, rays and probably, the three-pointed star of the International Brigades (Fig. 47).

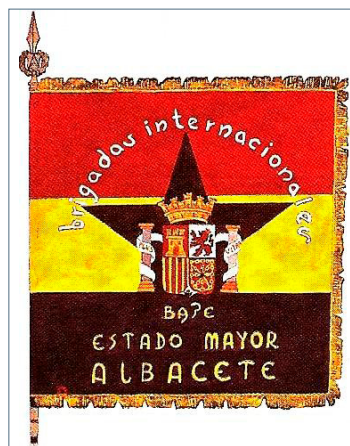


Fig. 47

## 7. AVIACION

International volunteers joined the Republican Air Forces, basically, in four squadrons:

The “*Escuadrilla España*”, organised by the French writer André Malraux, member of the Anti-fascist World Committee. Created in Barcelona in July 1936, they moved to Madrid on August 16, 1936. This squadron flight was increasing until half a hundred aeroplanes and three hundred people (pilots and other personnel).

In the “*Grupo 11 de Caza Nieuport 52*” with base in Getafe there were the Soviet pilots, first arrived to test the aeroplanes, and some British and Italians.

Also in the “*Escuadrilla de Bombardeo*” based in Alcalá de Herases there were Soviet pilots who tested the Breguet XIX and some French, Hungarian and Italian pilots.

In the “*Grupo 14 de Caza Nieuport NI-52*” and in the air force based in Bilbao and Lamiaco, there were also some international volunteers.

Related with the international air forces' symbols, we can only show their insignia (Fig. 48).



Fig. 48

In general, republican aircraft were decorated with large areas in red colour on the fuselage and wings and, normally, they retained the tricolour on the rudder and the republican roundel (Fig. 49).



Fig. 49

## 8. MEDICAL SERVICES

Concerning medical services, the Spanish War was also an experimental field of new proceedings and technologies. Moises Broggi, head surgeon of the mobile hospital of the brigades, in his book of memoirs, explains us the three important improvements in military healthcare that were realised during the war: the mobile hospitals, the blood bank and the systematisation of the treatment of the wounds.



Fig. 50



Fig. 51

Fig. 50 reproduces the flag of the Health Company of the 45 Division of the International Brigades. It is necessary to underline the maltese cross situated in a circle above

the three pointed star. Would this be the symbol of the Health of the BI?

On the photo of Fig. 51 appears a pennant of the SRI (International Red Help) on a van of the "Canadian Blood Transfusion Service"; from the greys of photography, they probably were red letters on white field.

## 9. OTHER SYMBOLS

We want to give you a few words about other symbols of the International Brigades, different from flags, standards and pennants: The Seal, the Three-Pointed Star, special Medals and the Cemetery of the International Brigades in Fuencarral.

### 9.1. Seal

We know the official seal of the International Brigades through several posters and it is now used by several ex-fighters' associations.

The seal is slightly different in the type of star, five-pointed (Figs. 52-54-55-56) or three-pointed (Fig. 54) and in the dates, 1936-1937 in posters of that time (Figs. 54-55) and 1936-1939 in their use after the war (Fig. 53).

I do not know if the flag reproduced on the poster shown in the Fig. 55, red with the seal placed to the hoist, was ever used as an official flag of the whole International Brigades; I presume that it is an invention of the designer.



Fig. 52

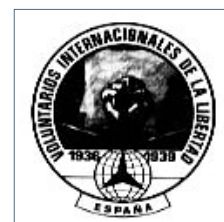


Fig. 53



Fig. 54





Fig. 55



Fig. 56

## 9.2. The Red Three Pointed Star

It is absolutely clear that the Tree-Pointed Star was the most representative symbol of the International Volunteers. But, what was its origin?

Some put it in the Paris Commune of 1871 and others say that the three-pointed star was the symbol of the “Frente Popular Internacional” (International People’s Front) and the “Socorro Rojo Internacional” (International Red Help).

Luigi Longo, one of the IB organisers, in his book about the International Brigades, identifies the three-pointed star as a distinctive symbol of unity and symbol of the People’s Front all over the world. Also, momentarily, the use of the red flag “without inscriptions or party symbols” was permitted.

*“Para cortar de raíz cualquier motivo de sospecha o desacuerdo político, se prohíbe en las formaciones militares de los voluntarios internacionales el uso de cualquier insignia o distintivo de partido, de sindicato o de cualquier otra organización partidaria. La bandera española es nuestra bandera oficial, por cuya victoria combatimos. Por el momento se tolera el uso de la bandera roja –sin inscripciones o símbolos de*

*partido- como símbolo de la solidaridad internacional. Como distintivo particular de los voluntarios y de los cuerpos internacionales se adopta la estrella de tres picos, símbolo del frente popular en todos los países.”*

Let’s take an overview on graphical use of this symbol:  
As an international army symbol:



57



58



59

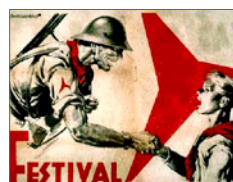


60



61

As a symbol for youth and women’s movements



62



63



64

Representing the International Red Help (Socorro Rojo Internacional)



65



66



67



68

Today, of course, the three-pointed star is of general use in veterans' societies and it is present in different types of supports in monuments, badges, pins, etc.



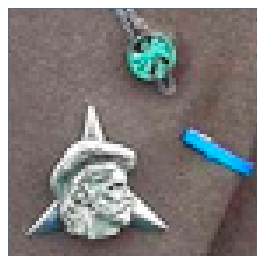
69



70



71



72

### 9.3 Medals

#### Medal of the international volunteers



Fig. 73

#### The "Hans Beimler Medal"

Established by the *Deutsche Demokratische Republik* (DDR) in 1956. The Hans Beimler medal was awarded for services in the "International Revolution and Liberation Struggle of the Spanish Peoples 1936-1939." The medal is silver in appearance and has a diameter of 32 mm. On the obverse stands a Portrait of Hans Beimler. On the upper outer portion of the obverse is the inscription of the years of Hans Beimler's lifespan "1895-1936." The reverse displays the emblem of the International Brigades, whose points are superimposed over the inner circle of letters spelling out the words "INTERNATIONALE BRIGADEN" and surrounded by an outer ring of letters "KAMPFER SPANIENS FREIHEIT 1936-1939" (FIGHTER FOR SPANISH LIBERTY 1936-1939) with the years of the Spanish Civil War placed at the bottom. The medal is suspended on a rectangular ribbon bar of red, yellow, and violet horizontal strips; on the outer edges of both sides are narrow vertical stripes of black, red, and gold, the colors of the German Flag.



Fig. 74

#### The "Jaroslaw Dabrowski Brigade Commemorative Decoration" (*Odznaka Pamiatkowa Dabrowszczakow*)

Instituted in 1945 to honour the soldiers of the Jaroslaw Dabrowski XIII International Brigade, which fought on the Republican side during the Spanish civil war of 1936-1939. Badge: 35 mm in diameter, made in white metal. The central part has the form of the three-pointed star depicting the bust of General Dabrowski. At the points of the star there is the inscription XIII / IB : 1936 : 1939.



A laurel wreath surrounds the star with a scroll containing an inscription in Spanish “*Por vuestra libertad y la nuestra*” (for your liberty and ours).



Fig. 75

### The Polish “Medal for Your Liberty and Ours”

Instituted by decree of the Polish State Council of October 18, 1956. Awarded to Polish volunteers who participated in the Spanish War of 1936-1939 on side of the Republic.

*Badge:* silver medal, 35 mm of diameter.

*Obverse:* head of one of the Republican army commanders, Gen. Swierczewski, circumscribed “*ZA WASZA WOLNOSC I NASZA*” (for your liberty and ours). Reverse: a three pointed star, surrounded by a laurel wreath, and with the inscription: XII / B I / 1936-1939 on it, and with the year of institution 1956 below; around runs the circumscription “*DABROWSZCZAKOM*” (to members of the Dabrowski battalion).

Ribbon red with a white central stripe (of the Spanish Military Order of Merit).



Fig. 76

### Bulgarian Communist Veteran’s Medal for the Spanish Civil War 1939

Instituted on 28 May 1974 and awarded to Bulgarian and foreign citizens who participated in the struggle with the International. The obverse of the medal is 33 mm in diameter, circular in shape, and made from yellow metal. Pictured on the obverse is a map of Spain with the three-pointed star and an image of a clenched fist. Written in Bulgarian are the words for “Fighters Against Fascism and Capitalism.” On the reverse is the five-pointed communist star, the bust of the Bulgarian Prime Minister, George Dimitrov, with the words “Bulgarian International Brigades – Spain – 1936-1939” positioned around the outer edge. The medal is suspended from a five-sided ribbon holder with a multi-coloured ribbon

in equal widths of red, yellow, violet, white, green and again red stripes that symbolize the national colours of Bulgaria and Spain.



Fig. 77

### Ex-Presidium of Supreme Soviet of USSR: Medal for Veteran-Internationalist / Медаль «Ветерану-интернационалисту» (unofficial), also known as “Umalatova Alternative Medals”

Created 16 October 1999 and awarded to a wide range of “veteran internationalist warriors” including those who fought in Afghanistan. This is an unofficial “Umatatova Decoration”. Obverse: A circular bright bronze medal with latitude and longitude lines and an overlaid hammer and sickle and an AK-74, muzzle upright. From the muzzle of the rifle a red-enameled carnation emerges. Below, there is a red-enameled ribbon bearing a gold five-pointed star. Surrounding the central design there is a Russian legend “*ВETERАНУ - ИНТЕРНАЦИОНАЛИСТУ*” or “To a Veteran-Internationalist”. Reverse: A six-line legend in Russian “*ИСПАНИЯ и СЕВЕРНАЯ КОРЕЯ и КУБА и БЛИЖНИЙ ВОСТОК и ВЬЕТНАМ и АФГАНИСТАН*” or “Spain, North Korea, Cuba, Near East, Vietnam, Afghanistan” with a wreath below and a five-pointed star above; this is, in turn, surrounded by a Russian legend “*УЧАСТНИКУ НАЦИОНАЛЬНО-ОСВОДИТЕЛЬНОГО ДВИЖЕНИЯ*” or “Participant in the National Liberation Movement” around the edge of the medal. Ribbon: A complex, 24-mm multi-colored ribbon, representing the areas in which service was rendered: gray, gold, green red, black, yellow, blue, gold, and gray. Suspended from a “Warsaw Pact” style pentagonal suspender.



Fig. 78

## Jubilarna Zna ka Jugoslovenskin Dubrovoljaca Spanske Republikanske Vojske. Medal 'International Brigades in Spain', Yugoslavia

Zalka Mate Medal, Hungary

### 9.4. International Brigades Cemetery at Fuencarral

The International Brigades Cemetery at Fuencarral is another kind of symbol; at the time of its organisation it was (I suppose) a propagandistic symbol and a perpetual remembrance of all international fellows who died defending Democracy, as the “flame to the Unknown Soldier” memorials all over the world.

Immediately after the war, Franco ordered its total destruction. Now, there, near the original place, there is a reproduction of the old tablet and several memorial monuments.

In the village of Fuencarral, now an area of Madrid, my mother Francisca Agüi was born, and my grandfather was the “*Secretario Judicial*” helped by my father Francisco Herreros, also “*Secretario Judicial*” of Alcobendas and San Sebastián de los Reyes.

The history of this symbol is very badly known, there are several pictures in books but there is not any explanation. Luigi Longo in his memoirs says:

*“Hay muchos héroes caídos por la defensa de Madrid, de todas las nacionalidades y orígenes sociales. La muerte ha reunido a los hijos de muchos pueblos, todos ellos militantes de un solo ideal de libertad y progreso. Un pequeño cementerio, el de Fuencarral, que ya es inmenso en el recuerdo de los pueblos, recoge los restos de los caídos que la piedad y el heroísmo de los camaradas han podido recuperar de los campos de batalla. Una inscripción en francés grabada sobre el mármol a lo largo del muro que rodea el cementerio, recuerda brevemente a los caídos: “Voluntarios de las Brigadas Internacionales ... caídos como héroes ... por la libertad del pueblo español, ... el bienestar y el progreso de la humanidad”. Sobre cada tumba una sencilla lápida de mármol consigna el nombre, la nacionalidad del caído y la fecha del sacrificio.”*



Fig. 79



Fig. 80

Because of the direct implication of my father, let me explain you my traditional memory:

In July 1936, when the civil war started, my father tried to join the Republican Army but, because of his job, was militarised and maintained in his duty in justice administration. Through this service my father had the opportunity to participate in a not very well known historical fact: the creation of the International Brigades Cemetery at Fuencarral.

Around November or December 1936, my father was informed about the presence of a cadaver on Mount El Pardo. Collaborating with his father (with problems of mobility) he went to fulfil his job, in spite of knowing that the body was in a militarised zone. Being there he was arrested by a patrol that took him to the command point. They were soldiers of the XII International Brigade who at that time were camped between Fuencarral and El Pardo. When my father justified the motive for his presence in the military zone, the commander who was interrogating him (or who simply was present) showed to be very interested. It happened to be the chief of the Brigade, General Paul Lukacz (name with which the well-known Polish writer Mate Zalka was known). He then proposed my father that, integrated in the XII BI, but, as it seems, depending on the “Inhumation Services of the International Brigades, he would take care of organising a cemetery which would serve as a last resting place for those “*Voluntaries of the International Brigades, killed heroically for the freedom of the Spanish people, welfare and progress of humanity*”. And thus he did.



Fig. 81



This is the document issued by the Military Registry of Salamanca that recognizes the adscription of Francisco Herreros to the Inhumation Service of the International Brigades with the grade of Lieutenant.



Fig. 82

In relation with this “Inhumation Service of the International Brigades”, I have not been able to find more information than what is mentioned here above. This lack of data is confirmed by Fernando Rodríguez de la Torre, doctor in Geography and History, member of the Albacete Institute for Studies, great scholar of the international brigades and author of the first “*World Bibliography about the International Brigades and the participation of foreigners in favour of the Republic*”, who, when knowing the data referred to by my father, picked it up in an article published in the newspaper *La Verdad*, Albacete, 2 December 2001. Fernando Rodríguez, in the e-mail in which he forwarded me the above said article concludes: “After having read in many languages over a thousand books about the I.B. I have neither found anything related with this Service, documented by you in the Registry of Salamanca.”

We will keep searching!

## EPILOGUE

Figures never will be clear; nevertheless, the last and most credible investigation put the number of international fighters between 35,000 and 40,000. From them, the most represented nationalities were:

France 25,4%, Poland 10%, Italy 10%, Germany 10%, USA 6,5%, Great Britain 5,4%, Belgium 5,2%, Czechoslovakia 5,5%, Hungary 3,6%, Yugoslavia 2,5%, Austria 2,5%, Canada 1,9%, the Netherlands 1,7%, Bulgaria 1,3%, Switzerland 1,1%, Romania 1%, Sweden 1%. Less than 1% were volunteers from: Abyssinia, Albania, Andorra, Arabia, Algeria, Argentina, Australia, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Chinese from the USA, Cuba, Denmark, Equator, Estonia, Philippines, Finland, Greece, Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras, India, Indochina, Ireland, Island, Israel, Jamaica, Japanese from the USA, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Morocco, Mexico, Mongolia, Montenegro, Nicaragua, Norway, Paraguay, Peru, Portugal, Puerto Rico, San Marino, Dominican Rep., Syria, Tangiers, Turkestan,

Turkey, Ukraine, South Africa, USSR, Uruguay and Venezuela. There are some other undetected nationalities.

60 years after their arrival, Spanish people said thank-you to the Internationals. From a Parliamentary proposal of the groups of “*Izquierda Unida - Iniciativa por Cataluña*”, “*Vasco (PNV)*” and “*Socialista*” the “*Congreso de Diputados*” (Spanish Congress) approved the concession of the Spanish Nationality to the Volunteers of the International Brigades who fought in the Spanish War 1936-1939, defending Democracy and their ideas. (Royal Decree 39/1996, of January 19th)



Fig. 83

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