ALLEGHENY COLLEGE

History 610
Senior Project

Hearts of Conflict: Motivations of English-Speaking Volunteers in the Spanish Civil War

River Shields

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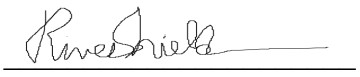
Department of History

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Abstract

In the Spanish Civil War, which took place between 1936 and 1939, a significant number of English-speaking volunteers joined the conflict. The two sides, Nationalists and Republicans, saw these volunteers join their ranks. The Nationalist volunteers saw a lack of members in comparison to the Republicans. Alongside this is a voice in the narrative. I explored three central questions: Who were the English-speaking volunteers in the Civil War? What motivated them to join? And what were the outcomes or contributions of their involvement? I argue that the key motivation for many of the English-speaking volunteers was ideology. In terms of accomplishments, it was the Republican English-speaking volunteers. While Nationalists, English-speaking volunteers, as a whole, may lack definitive accomplishment in comparison to their counterparts. It is essential to acknowledge the nuanced contributions of individual volunteers. This essay seeks to explore these accomplishments and failures, and to shed light on this neglected perspective in historical literature. Furthermore it seeks to show how ideology played a key factor in the motivation of these individuals. This adds to the existing historical literature perspectives often overlooked as well as adds complexity to the study of foreign volunteers in history.

Introduction

The Spanish Civil War began in 1936 and lasted until 1939. It was a major conflict that occurred right before World War II. The two sides present in the conflict were the Nationalists and the Republicans. The conflict started after a failed coup attempt by Nationalist Forces and was against the elected Republican government. The Nationalists were one of the sides of the conflict. To simplify, the Nationalists were a combination of right-leaning ideologies. Some of the standouts were Monarchists, Fascists, Carlists, and Conservatives. All of them unified under the Nationalists, which Fransico Franco eventually led in the war. The other side of the conflict was the Republicans. The Republicans were left-leaning and were the government in charge at the time of the rebellion. The major ideologies present were Socialists, Anarchists, and Communists. It was also democratic, as they were voted in before the war.

A statement made is that the Spanish Civil War was a microcosm of pre-World War II society.[1] This is seen with radically different ideologies fighting over Spain. The two main unifying factors being the ideological battle between the Nationalists and Republicans. So with the fate of the country hanging in the balance, foreign states began to intervene to try and sway the conflict. The reason behind intervention was due to strategic reasons. The establishment of an unfavorable regime in Spain could have strategic fallout. This could be a potential conflict in the future for example. A non-intervention agreement was signed between major powers to prevent meddling in the conflict. This didn't stop Germany, Italy, and the Soviet Union from sending supplies and volunteers. In my opinion, Western democracies staying out of the conflict may have supported the Nationalists indirectly. They were able to get the most manpower and supplies from their allies. While the restrictions mainly harmed the Republicans.

[1] Austin Carson, "The Spanish Civil War (1936–1939)," in *Secret Wars: Covert Conflict in International Politics*, 99–141 (Princeton University Press, 2018), 100.

The focus of this essay isn't on volunteers sent by major powers. Instead, we will be zoning in on foreign volunteers who organized themselves outside of a state's sponsorship. Volunteers from all over the English-speaking world arrived in Spain in varying amounts throughout the war. These volunteers were present on both sides of the conflict. Republicans had a large amount of volunteers compared to the Nationalists. This is of course in terms of volunteers from outside of a state. The Republican, English-speaking volunteers, also have a significant amount of literature compared to the Nationalists. This includes both primary and secondary sources. As the difference naturally piqued my interest to figure out why this is the case. This may have been due to a numerical difference, but a group of English-speaking nationalist volunteers known as the Irish Battalion had a lot of accounts associated with it. Therefore it may just be the amount of research done on the topic, but I am unsure of the exact reason.

In the process of research I wanted to keep the focus on two things: the volunteers' motivation and their accomplishments. To do this I asked three central questions: Who were the English-speaking volunteers in the Civil War? What motivated them to join, and what were the outcomes or contributions of their involvement? I argue the motivations and accomplishments of English-speaking Nationalist volunteers were shaped mainly by ideological reasons, but elements of adventure were still present. This depended on the individual and the side of the conflict. Through research I discovered that Republicans tended to identify more with ideology, but that adventure was still present. Nationalists tended to look first at adventure and experience, and then choose a side based on ideology. I also combine religion with ideology to a degree, as religion influenced what ideology and side of the conflict an individual may support.

In terms of accomplishments, this is pretty one-sided due to the amount of manpower and experience of the volunteers. Nationalist volunteers lacked manpower in comparison to Republican volunteers. Alongside this is that the one battalion-sized volunteer group under the Nationalists failed to achieve anything of note. Both battalions for the Republican side of the conflict made some impact within the Battle of Jarama, even if small. I focus on this battle because it included both sides of the English-speaking volunteers.

This essay is divided into three main chapters. The first chapter goes into more detail about the nature of Foreign volunteers throughout history. Alongside this is the background of the Spanish Civil War itself. This includes a global and local lens, and I decided to take a global viewpoint as the nature of foreign volunteers dictates such an approach to be valid.

The second chapter is about the Republican English-speaking volunteers. Firstly we go over the two battalions present. These are the British and Abraham Lincoln Battalions. After the first section, then I go into the volunteers themselves and their background. Finally, the chapter ends with a look at the accomplishments and conditions in the Battle of Jarama for the battalions.

The third chapter is about the Nationalist English-speaking volunteers. It follows a similar structure but due to the nature of sources, and lack of accounts, it follows a more individualistic approach. Firstly we go over the Battalions present on the Nationalist side. These are the Irish Battalion and the Spanish Foreign Legion as a whole. The final section of the chapter focuses on the individual accounts of the Spanish Foreign Legion I was able to come across. This excludes members of the Irish Battalion as they have their own section. So why is this important? Do we as historians need to care about Nationalist, English-speaking volunteers in any context? While this niche group of volunteers is overshadowed by other Nationalist volunteers and their counterparts on the Republican side, it is still essential. It is important to

acknowledge the nuanced contributions of individual volunteers. These men, and in some cases women, made a major decision to uproot their lives and travel to a foreign country and to fight and possibly give the ultimate sacrifice in this conflict. This essay explores these accomplishments and failures, and I hope to bring light on this neglected perspective in historical literature. To frame it in a new light, I show how both sides of the conflict received volunteers from the English-speaking community. It adds to the existing historical literature by looking at this overlooked perspective while also adding to the complexity of foreign volunteers in a general historical context. Foreign volunteers have played a big role in history, even in our modern conflicts. I hope that more research will be done in the future in regard not only to nationalist English-speaking volunteers but also to volunteers in conflicts throughout history. It can give us an insight into complex issues and motivations of society at the time.

Chapter 1:
Foreign Volunteers and the Spanish Civil War

As the Civil War raged in Spain, foreign volunteers flooded the country from all over the globe to fight for their respective beliefs. In this project, the goal is to look closer at English-speaking volunteers present during the Spanish Civil War. This chapter is designed to give the reader a better understanding of the Spanish Civil War as a whole. It also seeks to give context to the building blocks of motivation for the volunteers. The first two sections go into the background of the Spanish Civil War, both locally and internationally. This is necessary as the global context is key as it provides us with a possible reason and way that volunteers could hear about the conflict. It also gives us the dire situation and how the fate of Spain is at stake. Then lastly these first couple of sections go into the foreign help outside of the volunteers. This is because major powers sent supplies and volunteers to Spain, such as Germany, Italy, and the Soviet Union. The final two sections focus on providing context on the history of foreign volunteers, the motivation of volunteers, and their respective backgrounds.

As the focus is on English-speaking volunteers, it helps narrow down the viewpoint. Furthermore, I wanted to take a more focused approach to the Nationalists, as they lack the research material compared to the Republican volunteers. These were the two opposing sides in the conflict of the Spanish Civil War, the Nationalists and the Republicans. The main two forces with English-speaking volunteers in them are the Irish Battalion and the Spanish Foreign Legion. Individuals such as Peter Kemp and Vincent Patriarca end up fighting outside of these organizations. In Kemp's case, he joined a Carlist militia on the Nationalist side, called the *Requeté*.[1] He later joined the Spanish Foreign Legion, after going through different divisions.

[1] Peter Kemp, *Mine Were of Trouble: A Nationalist Account of the Spanish Civil War* (Monee, IL: Interbooks, 2023), 32.

Vincent Patriarca joined the Italians in their volunteer group as a pilot.[2] He also fought in Ethiopia on the Italian side.

In terms of volunteers on the Republican side, a lot more information can be found. This is due to the amount of accounts research on Republican English-speaking volunteers. As they were more numerous, so plenty wrote about their experiences. English-speaking volunteers were found in the Republican international forces, called the International Brigades. Other volunteers were present in militias. George Orwell, for example, was in a POUM militia.[3] Generally, the majority of volunteers who spoke English were in the International Brigades. The two English-speaking brigades that will be focused on are the Abraham Lincoln Battalion and the British Battalion. The second chapter of this paper will narrow in on these two specific battalions.

The Spanish Civil War

The Spanish Civil War itself began in 1936 and lasted until 1939. Spain before the civil war had gone through some major changes. In 1898, the collapse of the old Empire and *El Desastre* (The Disaster) took place. *El Desastre* was the outcome from the Spanish-American War. It saw Spain in conflict with America over their colonial holdings. From this Spain lost their colonial holdings, as well as it left a trauma on the nation. As Spain had been declining as an imperial power, and this event solidified that decline. Therefore this collapse shook the foundations of Spanish society and general pessimism grew.[4] Spain also did not join the First World War, which although it spared the country from the war, still had an impact. One of the impacts of this was the lack of military evolution from previous military doctrines. As noted by

[2] Vincent Patriarca , "Two Wars in One Year," *Cavalcade Magazine*, May 1937.
[3] George Orwell, *Homage to Catalonia* (New York, NY: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1952).
[4] Julián Casanova, *A Short History of the Spanish Civil War*, 1st ed. (London: New York, I.B.Tauris, 2013), 2.

many veterans who volunteered, a lot of casualties were caused due to not understanding modern warfare. The misunderstanding of modern warfare occurred due to the Spanish not having joined the first World War. Therefore, much of the experiences and horror of the war were not felt. This led to a disconnect between the Spanish command and the battalions with veterans in them. As seen in Jarama Valley, Commander Tom Wintringham with the British Battalion, refused to charge into an enemy machine-gun position.[5] This brought him into conflict with Spanish officers working with the international battalions. So from this, we can see a disconnect between military doctrine caused by the lack of experience in modern warfare.

In the inter-war period, the government was a dictatorship under General Miguel de Rivera in Spain. It started in September 1923 and lasted until 1930. The monarchy of Spain at the time played the role of a figurehead during this period. As Rivera ran the country. After the fall of the dictatorship, King Alfonso XIII tried to maintain power but ended up abdicating as it failed. Interestingly enough, a republic rose into this power vacuum, and although early signs of discontent were present, it was a republic with democratic rule. Both the left and the right had to agree to this regime for it to function. In fact, they had to agree to the regime for it to even form in the first place. Through this Spain became a democracy . Yet a dictatorial regime once again came about after the success of Francisco Franco's government in winning the civil war. Franco was the leader of the Nationalist Spain during and after the Spanish Civil War. In his vision, Spain would be under a right-wing government with such values. Franco himself was against communism and viewed it as a threat.[6] Arguments in terms of the exact outcome and causes are still debated. As some historians may have a more local viewpoint rather than a global one. An argument is made that the Civil War was a catastrophic interruption of the ongoing process of

[5] Giles Tremlett, *The International Brigades: Fascism, Freedom and the Spanish Civil War* (London, UK: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2020), 223.
[6] Peter Kemp, *Mine Were of Trouble*, 158.

economic and democratic modernization.[7] This argument is made by Spanish historians such as Santos Juli, Gabriel Tortella, Julián Casanova, and others.[8] This interruption would be dissolved upon Franco's death and resume in the 1970s. These factors play a role in the decision of volunteers to fight, and therefore I felt it was necessary to look into them. However, the scope of the debate of exact causes, whichever had more effect, is not important to this essay. Rather we are looking at the effect on volunteers.

In 1933, the result of rising discontent culminated in a failed military uprising in September. General José Sanjurjo was the leader of this uprising. Then in the following year, another revolt took place. This was called the Asturias Mining Strike and saw various left-leaning workers rise against the government.[9] It included a wide range of ideologies but noted are socialists and anarchists. This was put down harshly by General Fransico Franco and his Army of Africa, which included the Spanish Foreign Legion. The Spanish Foreign Legion was part of the Spanish army, formed on September 20, 1920, it initially was formed to focus on wars in Spain's African colonies but eventually became an elite fighting force used in the Spanish Civil War. The Asturias Mining Strike shows the increasing divide between both sides of the political spectrum.

Although the final event of unrest was the Civil War, let us look into how this unrest was prevalent throughout society. Economic class played a major role, as the Great Depression hit Spain just as hard as the rest of the world. Besides the obvious division of the upper, middle, and lower class, there existed what was called "good families". These were groups who were protected by capitalism, which was supported by the state. These "good families" were part of the bourgeoisie and from the control of the banks, influenced large industries and economic

[7] Gabriel Jackson, "Multiple Historic Meanings of the Spanish Civil War," *Science & Society* 68, no. 3 (2004): 275.
[8] Jackson, "Multiple Historic Meanings," 275.
[9] Casanova, *A Short History*, 2.

policies.[10] This divide in class and status was commented on by both sides surprisingly, with the founder of the Falange, the Spanish Fascist Party, stating it to be "absolutely intolerable."[11] This aspect of unrest wasn't helped as the Great Depression caused an economic downturn globally. During this period, extremism would rise from this downturn, as people looked for solutions. All this undermined the belief in liberalism and democracy, further causing issues for the Republic. The two previously mentioned rebellions only furthered the turbulence and unrest within the Republic. A melting pot of various issues caused the Civil War. Next let us look at the culture of Spain, particularly about religion.

Just like the economic issues, Spain was split by culture. Catholics were persecuted in "red" sectors or those of the Republic upon the outbreak of the civil war. Even beforehand, the divide between Catholics and non-Catholics was showing. The gulf between these two conflicting cultural worlds was a major factor in the conflict, and many Spaniards who were indifferent were caught in the middle of the struggle.[12] The anticlerical movement had gained momentum in 19th-century Spain. It would resist with all its might the coming modernization and secularization.[13] In the Republican constitution that the parliament passed in 1931, various clauses restricted the Church's power. Some of these were the non-confessional nature of the State or secularization of judgment, removing the financing of the clergy, bringing in civil marriages and divorce, as well as the displacement of religious orders from the classroom.[14] This was seen as an attack against the faith as a whole. The church itself was seen as a major institution within Spain, as it held an enormous amount of power in society. So naturally this caused tensions throughout the cultural landscape of Spain. The blame for the decline of religion

[10] Burnett Bolloten and George Richard Esenwein, *The Spanish Civil War: Revolution and Counterrevolution*, 2nd ed. (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2015), 3.
[11] Bolloten and Esenwein, *The Spanish Civil War*, 2nd ed., 2015, 3.
[12] Casanova, *A Short History*, 46.
[13] Casanova, *A Short History*, 45.
[14] Casanova, *A Short History*, 47.

was therefore placed on the Republic for passing such legislation. Therefore we can see the importance of religion in the context of the Civil War and the Republican government leading up to the war. Although the exact extent of the effect of Catholicism within the Spanish Civil War could be debated. As historian Julian Casanova states its importance through a whole chapter in his book.[15] I believe this shows the importance of religion and culture in a conflict. Within the context of the Nationalist side, it played an even bigger role. Many of the volunteers were religious on the Nationalist side, with a few of the volunteers that will be mentioned in this essay citing it as a major reason for volunteering.

Leading up to the Civil War, Spain is in a troubling position. As we looked at, civilians were losing faith in the government in almost all aspects. The increasing divide among the political spectrum, and the increase of unrest among the Spanish population. The economic downturn and divide between classes only cause more issues in the Republican government's ability to maintain control. We see this divide among Catholics as well, with movements both supporting and wanting to get rid of the clergy. Ultimately this melting pot of tension and unrest boiled over leading to the outbreak of the civil war.

Republican and Nationalist

Let us briefly touch on the sides themselves without going into too much unnecessary detail. Both these sides of the conflict have rich history and deserve their own respective studies. For the sake of volunteers not all of the information is necessary. The Nationalists start the civil war after a failed coup attempt. Franciso Franco, who was a major figurehead in the military, eventually ended up with the leadership of the Nationalists. The Nationalists themselves were a

[15] Casanova, *A Short History*, 50.

multitude of sides under a single banner, that tended to be right-wing leaning values. An example of major parties besides the general “Nationalists" were the Carlists and the Falangists. The Carlists were mainly in the north and fought around the ideas of monarchism. They had fought beforehand against the Spanish government in the Carlists Wars. These stem from monarchist succession laws which caused controversy over the next ruler in the 19th century. The Falangists were generally put into the idea of “Spanish Fascism”. The Falangists were a new face of fascism with the mask of Spain.

The Republicans were in power before the failed coup, and Manuel Azaña was in power during the Civil War. The Republicans were a general coalition of left-leaning values. Major factions outside of the main Popular Front included a multitude of factions. Many fragmented groups rose to defend the Republic. Once again for the sake of a general overview, I will list the major factions present in the conflict. One of the factions was the CNT-FAI, which stands for *Confederación Nacional del Trabajo* and *Federación Anarquista Ibérica*. In english this was the National Confederation of Labor and Iberian Anarchist Federation. When working together these two political parties would form the CNT-FAI. A political party called the *Partido Obrero de Unificación Marxista*, or the Workers’ Party of Marxist Unification was another faction. It is referred to as POUM, and was associated with Trotskyists. As well as the PCE which was a communist party aligned with the Soviet Union. Two other factions worth mentioning were both Basque and Catalan nationalist movements which wanted autonomy. With a large amount of ideologies, they were sometimes at odds with each other. This created a deep division within the Republic as these factions had conflicting interests.[16] An event called “May Days”, occurred

[16] Fridrikh I. Firsov, Harvey Klehr, John Earl Haynes, and Lynn Visson, “The Spanish Civil War,” in *Secret Cables of the Comintern, 1933-1943*, 68–84 (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2014), 68.

when the Spanish Communist Party provoked a crisis with the Anarchists.[17] This was a set of various clashes that happened within the Spanish Republic. This led to sporadic violence and even created divides within the International Brigade based on ideology.[18] The in-fighting was a major issue that plagued the Republican side throughout the war.

The key here is to show the presence of factions within the main parties. Some of this played a more direct role than others, and influenced the actions of volunteers. As with such a complex and rich political landscape, volunteers could join a side that follows alongside their beliefs. It also shows us the complex nature of the civil war and how the outcome could change the fate of Spain. Whichever side can effectively win, has the chance to completely change the Spanish nation's fate for the future.

World Wide Context

So why does any of this matter? How does it apply to foreign volunteers? Put simply the conflict was given global attention. All these factors would make themselves known in newspapers. This form of information played a major role in causing the civil war to become a worldwide conflict. News reporters flood into the country to try and get the latest stories and information out to their readers. These were tainted with bias and used as a tool depending on the side of the newspaper company. An example of this was written by English travelers to Nationalist Spain. These narratives were written by mainly Catholic and already pro-Franco authors and then consumed by readers supporting such an ideology.[19] This makes sense and was used as a means of propaganda for Nationalist Spain. Controlling the reporting could allow you

[17] Kenyon Zimmer, "The Other Volunteers: American Anarchists and the Spanish Civil War, 1936–1939," *Journal for the Study of Radicalism* 10, no. 2 (2016): 19–52, https://doi.org/10.14321/jstudradi.10.2.0019, 36.
[18] Zimmer, "The Other Volunteers," 38.
[19] Judith Keene, *Fighting for Franco: International Volunteers in Nationalist Spain During the Spanish Civil War* (London: Bloomsbury Publishing Plc, 2007), accessed November 30, 2023, ProQuest Ebook Central, 46.

to control the narrative. This form of media control would be a major strategic advantage in any type of conflict.

So the Spanish Civil War became a major event in the world. The world itself during this period saw some major shifts in geopolitical politics as well. Countries such as Germany and Italy saw fascist leaders, Adolf Hitler and Benito Mussolini, rise to power. These two sought to spread fascism throughout Europe. The depression had caused extremism and general unrest to rise throughout the world. Peter Carroll states, "The depression that caused the presidency of Franklin D. Roosevelt in 1933 also pushed Adolf Hitler to take power within Germany."[20] I agree, it played a massive role in the power struggle within these nations. Both of these figures promised economic recovery within their nations. The spread of fascism was mentioned in a variety of volunteers' reasons to join the Spanish Civil War.[21] An example is seen within Britain with anti-fascists battling against their reflection of a fascist party.[22] This will be further looked at in the respective Britain Battalion section of the essay. In much the same vein, the Soviet Union had come into power after their civil war.

Interestingly enough from all these countries mentioned above, the presence of volunteers on both sides of the conflict are seen. White Russians, for example, saw the Spanish Civil War as symbolic of their struggle against the Bolsheviks.[23] These White Russians were a holdover from the Russian Civil War. They were Russians who sided against communism during their civil war. From this, we see not only the tensions present around the globe but also the continuation of previous conflicts.

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[20] Peter Carroll, *From Guernica to Human Rights: Essays on the Spanish Civil War* (Kent, Ohio: The Kent State University Press, 2015), 20.
[21] Richard Baxell, *British Volunteers in the Spanish Civil War: The British Battalion in the International Brigades*, 1936-1939 (London: Routledge, 2004), 30.
[22] Baxell, *British Volunteers*, 34.
[23] Núñez Seixas, Xosé M., and Oleg Beyda. "'Defeat, Victory, Repeat': Russian Émigrés between the Spanish Civil War and Operation Barbarossa, 1936–1944," *Contemporary European History*, 2023, 1–16, https://doi.org/10.1017/S0960777323000085, 3.

Austin Carson stated how the Spanish Civil War was in effect a microcosm of the ideological clash during the time.[24] I am inclined to agree with this idea. The shifting political ideologies, extremism, and economic downturn all played a role throughout the globe during this period. In Spain, this tension boiled over, therefore somewhat causing the Civil War. Regarding foreign volunteers, this viewpoint is necessary for analyzing them. The influence of a foreign country's conflict influenced them enough to travel abroad to risk their lives.

In terms of the response of the international community towards the Spanish Civil War, a general stance of non-intervention was taken. This didn't stop Italy, Germany, and the Soviet Union from sending military supplies and personnel within months of the coup attempt by Francisco Franco.[25] The fear and reluctance to support a side were mainly present in Western democracies such as Britain, France, and the United States. Britain and France followed a similar trend that-happened until the outbreak of WWII, this being appeasement.[26] The creation of this policy was designed to limit the escalation of a war. This of course failed, and in some ways could be argued helped Nationalists during the Spanish Civil War. Roderick MacFarquar, who was an ambulance driver in Spain from Jan 1937 to Oct 1938, gave his personnel account on the issues present. He argued that this agreement throttled the Republic.[27] This has some sound reasoning, as the non-intervention agreement did make it difficult for volunteers to arrive in Spain. This was of course because it had become illegal. Furthermore, the shipping of supplies was restricted and could be intercepted. A final shipment was being transported from the United States. The shipment had armaments worth 2 million in value aboard and had been sent before the ban. The operation was headed by five Spanish anarchist immigrants from the United States.

[24] Carson, "The Spanish Civil War," 100.
[25] Carson, "The Spanish Civil War," 99.
[26] Casanova, *A Short History*, 29.
[27] Baxell, *British Volunteers*, 29.

They were caught by Franco's navy off the coast of Spain, with the crew and five anarchists aboard being executed.[28] This restricted the supplies that the Republic could get from private organizations separated from the state. Equipment was an issue prevalent throughout the military on the Republican side. Eventually, the Republic got supplies from the Soviet Union. This equipment was outdated and lacking, compared to the Nationalists, who had access to the Axis's full arsenal.[29] This leads to an argument about the exact number and impact foreign intervention had on the Spanish Civil War. This of course was a major factor as it would show who had the most military support. It could be used as a justification for the sending of aid and support narratives of either side. It can also show us the impact of foreign intervention on either side, whether from volunteers or states themselves.

Foreign Help and Volunteers in the Civil War

In this section, we will briefly look at the exact number of total volunteers. This provides context into the total number of volunteers, from all over the globe, not just those that spoke English. Such as how much of a numerical advantage one side over the other had in terms of volunteers. It further plays a role in the narrative, as one side could accuse the other of getting outside help, therefore requesting their own. Foreign aid came in both volunteers, personnel, and material. Before going into the numbers it should be noted that these are estimates from the cited sources. The Condor Legion was a group of men sent by the German state to assist the Nationalists. They numbered around 17,000 total throughout the whole war.[30] Another source had it listed at around 19,000.[31] However, at any time in the war, the Condor Legion had no more

[28] Zimmer, "The Other Volunteers," 23.
[29] Casanova, *A Short History*, 92.
[30] Carson, "The Spanish Civil War," 107.
[31] Casanova, *A Short History*, 98.

than 5,500 within Spain.[32] This includes general personnel as well. Italian volunteers included the *Corpo di Truppe Volontarie* (CTV). Julian Casanova cites John Coverdale's opinion on the matter, citing the Italians had a permanent force of 40,000.[33] This peaked at around 72,775 men.[34] Italians also gave air force volunteers, although their numbers were focused on ground forces compared to Germany. Germany tried to avoid this due to the fear of France getting involved.[35] So a level of caution was taken in sending volunteers as a result. So in an estimate, the Nationalists had around 89,000 men in total, participate in the Spanish Civil War. This wasn't at one time; it was throughout the war.

In comparison, the Republican aid was around 35,000 volunteers throughout the war.[36] The Nationalist number of personnel is around 2.5 times larger than that of the Republicans. Even if you were to account for the Soviet Union's approximately 2,000 volunteers in total.[37] The Soviet Union did have both official and unofficial volunteers, but this does not add a significant amount to the total.[38] These numbers do not even include supplies and equipment. While the Nationalists were getting unrestricted access to the Axis powers supplies, the Republicans were struggling with the Soviet Unions. Their government had to go through arms dealers to purchase the outdated equipment.[39] This pretty clearly shows the advantage in terms of personnel, allies, and equipment.

Through this comparison, we see the difference between volunteers and foreign aid. While the Republicans got more individual volunteers from around the globe, it was informally,

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[32] Casanova, *A Short History*, 98.
[33] Casanova, *A Short History*, 98.
[34] Casanova, *A Short History*, 98.
[35] Carson, "The Spanish Civil War," 106.
[36] Casanova, *A Short History*, 96.
[37] John McCannon, "Soviet Intervention in the Spanish Civil War, 1936–39: A Reexamination," *Russian History* 22, no. 2 (1995): 154–80, http://www.jstor.org/stable/24657802, 160.
[38] McCannon, "Soviet Intervention," 161.
[39] Casanova, *A Short History*, 92.

and not connected to a state. The Nationalists received volunteers directly from the states of Italy and Germany, with both providing a significant amount. The difference only grows if informal volunteers are added into the mix, but this number isn't significant. We have spent a significant amount of time discussing the background of the Spanish Civil War. We have also discussed the background of volunteers in terms of conditions, allegiance, and amount, but what are foreign volunteers? What is the history behind them? What motivated volunteers throughout history to put their lives on the line?

What are Foreign Volunteers?

Foreign volunteers have been present in warfare for an extensive amount of time. This lengthens if you include mercenaries in the context. This context includes the definitions and history behind foreign volunteers. All this is necessary to understand what volunteers are in the context of history, as well as the Spanish Civil War.

To look at foreign volunteers is to look at foreign fighters. These combatants have been within militaries for a long time. The topic itself could be studied alone as it plays a major role in both war and society. Some of the nuances present within the context are the types of combatants. Essentially any type of foreign military personnel can be divided into three forms according to Steven O'Connor and Guillaume Piketty.[40] The first is professional soldiers who are employed directly by a state. This is done mainly for the soldiers' military skills and falls under the label of mercenaries. A second group is foreign fighters or volunteers who participate in a conflict for reasons outside of monetary incentives.-A third group is those from a belligerent power who served in the army of an ally in a conflict. All three of these were present in the

[40] Steven O'Connor and Guillaume Piketty, "Introduction – Foreign Fighters and Multinational Armies: From Civil Conflicts to Coalition Wars, 1848–2015," *European Review of History: Revue Européenne d'histoire* 27, no. 1–2 (2020): 1–11, doi:10.1080/13507486.2019.1709048.

Spanish Civil War. However, an issue is present within these groups. What about volunteers who are not in combat roles? Or what about those with mixed reasons for volunteering? It could be true a volunteer joined for both some type of pay, but also because of ideological leaning. This is where the idea of foreign volunteers and foreign fighters becomes gray in terms of categorization. In general, however, the second category fits as the pay wasn't a guarantee. The pay in the Spanish Civil War was 'minimal and erratic' according to Tom Buchanan, a historian within the field of the Spanish Civil War.[41] It also isn't mentioned as a focus for many of the volunteers throughout the conflict, but rather a bonus to volunteering.[42] It should be noted that Buchanan is referring to the Republican volunteers. Specifically concerning the International Brigades. But it is still present in both, as the pay was simply not sufficient to tempt men into risking their lives.[43] The pay itself was less than a Spanish Soldier in the 15th International Brigade at 70 pesetas, while the latter got 100 pesetas.[44] Although conditions for the Foreign Legion, which was on the Nationalist side, proved to be very different. The Spanish Foreign Legion paid a significant amount more than regular military forces.[45] This was due to the elite nature of the Spanish Foreign Legion. Benefits such as full pay rates during injury or sickness were given as well. Food and housing were better than the common soldier, and a new identity could be sought after once in the Legion.[46] This new identity could allow a person to reinvent themselves. As it was essentially a chance to start over as a new person. Therefore, changing your identity, if you so decide to. So we can see some incentives depending on the exact military grouping being joined by a volunteer.

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[41] Baxell, *British Volunteers*, 30.
[42] Baxell, *British Volunteers*, 30.
[43] Baxell, *British Volunteers*, 30.
[44] Baxell, *British Volunteers*, 30.
[45] Judith Keene, *Fighting for Franco: International Volunteers in Nationalist Spain During the Spanish Civil War* (London: Bloomsbury Publishing Plc, 2007), accessed November 30, 2023, ProQuest Ebook Central, 28.
[46] Keene, *Fighting for Franco*, 29.

I feel it is worth expanding upon the exact nature of volunteers outside of soldiering roles. Both sides would see for example nurses, which lay outside of the definitions given to foreign fighters. This topic deserves extensive study, but I will lay out a brief analysis of nurses during the Spanish Civil War. The reason behind this is some nurses were English. One in particular, named Pip Scott-Ellis served on the nationalist side.[47] In this essay, the focus is on those volunteers who fit into the idea of "soldiering", a term that means serving as a soldier within the military. But for context, non-combat roles like nurses also had volunteers join on both sides of the conflict. The Red Cross, for example, organized classes for both sides.[48] The Nationalist side interestingly enough had a more varied landscape due to different organizations handling training.[49] This was because of the varying landscape of organizations that handled the mobilization of women during the war.[50] The classes were for helping train nurses to provide care to victims of the war. These nurses were volunteers from all over the world, just like the soldiers, with some speaking English. As mentioned before, Peter Kemp, a volunteer on the Nationalist side mentions encountering an English nurse.[51] So as we can see other volunteers besides soldiers are present in the conflict. Although the focus isn't on the non-combatants, it is worth mentioning as they too are volunteers. These volunteers may be driven by similar factors as the soldiers.

In terms of the history of foreign volunteers, a good comparison that is even made by Nationalists within the Spanish Civil War is with the Crusades. The Crusades occurred in the Middle Ages and saw many different reasons for volunteers to join the conflict. The main point

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[47] Kemp, *Mine Were of Trouble*, 149.
[48] M. López, R. Mirón-González, M. J. Castro, and J. M. Jiménez, "Training of Volunteer Nurses during the Spanish Civil War (1936-1939): A Historical Study," *PLoS One* (Published Online, 2021), https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0261787.
[49] López et al., "Training of Volunteer Nurses," *PLoS One* (2021).
[50] López et al., "Training of Volunteer Nurses," *PLoS One* (2021).
[51] Kemp, *Mine Were of Trouble*, 149.

often focused on is religion, with a heavy ideological reason to join. As Christians felt in danger of persecution on their pilgrimages to Jerusalem. Also the encroaching of foreign powers following other religions. Other incentives also existed, however, such as gaining wealth and prestige within society. These incentives add to the complexity of choosing or dismissing the exact motivating factors within the conflict.[52] Similarly, the Spanish Civil War also has a variety of factors, with religion playing a role. Eion O'Duffy, the leader of the Irish Battalion for the Nationalists, named his memoir *Crusade in Spain*, likening it back to the Crusades.[53] Most notable are the Nationalist volunteers, and the Nationalists in general, who held Catholicism in high regard. Ireland was neutral upon the onset of the conflict but later supported Nationalist Spain due to the persecution of the Church by some Republicans.[54] Some volunteers specifically mention the importance of religion such as the Irish Battalion. This makes sense as the deciding factor in public opinion towards the conflict was based on religion. Individuals also mentioned this such as Nugent Bull, an Australian volunteer in the Spanish Foreign Legion.[55] In the course of studying the topic of religion, it doesn't appear to play a major role in the Republican English-speaking volunteer's decisions to volunteer.

As we can see foreign volunteers have been present in history for a long time. So it isn't surprising they appeared in another conflict. The Spanish Civil War saw similar factors as in the past for volunteers to join the conflict. Monetary incentives were not a major driving factor, yet it was still present to some extent. Even for those in the Spanish Foreign Legion, in which better status and conditions were present, it also entailed greater risk and discipline. Peter Kemp mentions how he was drawn to "first-class soldering" and the elite nature of the Foreign

[52] Nir Arielli, *From Byron to Bin Laden: A History of Foreign War Volunteers* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2018), 23.
[53] Eoin O'Duffy and Michael McCormack, *Crusade in Spain* (Orkney, Scotland: Reconquista Press, 2019).
[54] J. Bowyer Bell, "Ireland and the Spanish Civil War, 1936-1939," *Studia Hibernica* (1969), 142.
[55] Keene, *Fighting for Franco*, 108.

Legion.[56] We, as mentioned before, saw religion playing somewhat of a role. In history, this could be a valid reason to volunteer. All this serves to put the conflict into perspective in history. We see similar themes as those throughout the past for reasons behind volunteering. Volunteers risk their lives for a variety of reasons, it is disingenuous to attribute it to a single reason. These factors include ideology, religion, military life or experience, and even just pay.

Before the end of the chapter, it is necessary to understand why I chose to write about this group in particular. The reason I chose English-speaking foreign volunteers, over French-speaking, or Russian, is simply because it was less restrictive. I am only fluent in a single language, this being English, so getting sources would have been difficult. Even with English, many of the sources are in Spanish, which is a barrier to entry for my personnel. My main inspiration was reading a memoir, which piqued my interest in the subject. Whenever the Spanish Civil War was discussed, it was discussed in such a manner that simplified the conflict. The mention of volunteers was vague and seemed like it needed more depth. The varying number of people who joined the conflict to fight, for whatever side or reason, is interesting as it provides us with additional context for the period. Originally I sought to narrow the focus only to Nationalist English-speaking, but sources of Nationalists outside of the Irish Battalion were difficult to come across.

After all this information, the upcoming chapter will further narrow down the topic, to only focus on the Republican English-speaking brigades that were present in the war. These two are Abraham Lincoln and the British Battalion.

[56] Kemp, *Mine Were of Trouble*, 82.

Chapter 2:
Republican English-speaking Volunteers

The chapter is on Republican English-speaking volunteers of the Spanish Civil War. This chapter looks at the two essential battalions which included English-speaking volunteers. These two are the British Battalion and the Abraham Lincoln Battalion. Both were attached to the International Brigade. After a general background about the battalions, we look at the individuals within them. The following questions are asked: who were the individuals, what were their backgrounds, and what motivated them to join the conflict. The final section discusses the volunteers' impact on the war effort as a whole. Specifically in the case of the Battle of Jarama. Volunteers from both sides were present in the battle. Which makes it the perfect case study to see the effect of the volunteers. My argument is that although English-speaking volunteers joined the Republicans for different reasons, ideology played the biggest role. Furthermore, the impact of the Republican volunteers was significant in the Battle of Jarama, and in extension the war as a whole.

British and Abraham Lincoln Battalion

During the war, around 2,500 men and women left Britain to fight for the Republican side. Many of these men and women ended up within the British Battalion. Some fought outside of the Republican military. This was in the form of militias that found membership in local populations and political parties. An example is George Orwell, who was a major figurehead in literature. He wrote the novels "1984" and "Animal Farm", which deal with authoritative regimes. "Animal Farm", is a work which saw inspiration from his time in Spain. As it deals with communist values and the descent of a regime into authoritarianism. Originally he had

traveled to Spain to report, but ended up joining the militia. An exact number of the different men and women isn't present, as many went under different names or records were just not kept. To add to this, the Republicans were on the defensive most of the war. This meant as they were being pushed, it was difficult to recover the bodies or passbooks of the deceased.[1] This is to add to the fact that Republican authorities' refused to advise units if members were hospitalized.[2] Naturally, this led to more confusion over identification and casualty calculation. Therefore an estimate of 2,500 was made.[3]

The British Battalion itself was under the International Brigades. This was created by the Comintern. The Comintern, or the Third International, was an international organization of communists. It was led by the Soviet Union and had the main objective of spreading communism globally. It saw the mass mobilization of organizations to recruit and train volunteers.[4] Coordination of the operation took place by the Communist Party in France, which had a popular front government ruling, in a similar vein to Spain. The first 3,000 volunteers within Spain even saw a few from Britain. Among this initial group were George Orwell and Esmond Romilly, Winston Churchill's nephew.[5] At this point, the volunteers were in a similar position to those of the Nationalists. Individuals had to make their way without a direct guiding hand. The volunteers were organized into battalions based on culture and language. The British Battalion itself was officially formed in early 1937, but some British members would see combat in December of 1936.

Some British were already fighting in battalions. James Albrighton, a student from Salisbury, arrived with one of these groups on October 2, 1936.[6] He kept a journal and was

[1] Baxell, *British Volunteers*, 12.
[2] Baxell, *British Volunteers*, 12.
[3] Baxell, *British Volunteers*, 18.
[4] Antony Beevor, *The Battle for Spain: The Spanish Civil War, 1936-1939* (New York: Penguin Books, 2006), 157.
[5] Baxell, *British Volunteers*, 4.
[6] Baxell, *British Volunteers*, 50.

involved with the Muerte es Maestro group. This group was involved in executions in the Republican rear of suspected enemies. The group found its way to the defense of Madrid, with this Spanish unit in one of the three sections.[7] So we can see the difficulty in finding the numbers of how many English-speaking volunteers were present before the formation of the British Battalion. A key detail here is the presence of English-speaking volunteers at the defense of Madrid. The defense of Madrid saw a worldwide publicity campaign focused on the international Battalion that fought within the battle.[8] They only made up a small part of the defending forces. This was less than 5 percent of the defending forces.[9] The international coverage and focus on the volunteers was a mixed bag. As the unpublicized efforts of the Spanish commanders and soldiers who were the majority of the forces, remained in the background in newspapers. Richard Baxell, a historian, suggests that the arrival of the first international volunteers made a crucial difference.[10] Whether or not this is the case, it still stands to reason that an impact was made in some form. The media was focused on the impact that the International volunteers had on the battle.[11] It also served to show that volunteers could make a difference in a battle. The defense of Madrid provided publicity from the news on international volunteers. Obviously, this brought them to the spotlight around the globe.

It may even be possible it could have gained the attention of possible volunteers. Who may have seen the event and decided to volunteer. This could be an interesting question and hypothesis to research. It could also provide insight into the media's influence on volunteers and by extension the war effort. But, for the sack of facts, I am not certain it did play a role. I only hypothesized it may have, and should be researched further by historians.

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[7] Baxell, *British Volunteers*, 51.
[8] Cecil D. Eby, *Comrades and Commissars: The Lincoln Battalion in the Spanish Civil War* (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2007), 9.
[9] Baxell, *British Volunteers*, 60.
[10] Hugh Thomas, *The Spanish Civil War: Revised Edition* (London: Modern Library, 2001), 480.
[11] Eby, *Comrades and Commissars*, 9.

The British Battalion was formed by bringing over many of the soldiers already fighting in the country. It also drew upon those volunteers arriving at the time into the country. After the unit was formed, it saw combat until the official end of all volunteer service in Spain. This occurred in September 1938. The British Battalion itself took part in some of the major battles in the war. These include the following: The Battle of Jarama, the Battle of the Brunete, the Battle of Teruel, and the Battle of the Ebro. Do not be mistaken that these battles were a single event, rather it was various campaigns throughout the war. These specific battles were just smaller events, in a large battlefield that the battalions took part in. Jarama and Brunete occurred around Madrid in 1937. Teruel and Ebro occured around the region of Aragon from 1937-1938.

The Abraham Lincoln Battalion was officially formed in 1937. The Battalion itself had around 2,800 volunteers in total.[12] Once again this is an estimate, as it was difficult to keep track of volunteers. The men of the Lincoln Battalion were pretty diverse. Of course, the British Battalion was also diverse, as any English speaker could be placed in it. This includes the British Isle but also the entire commonwealth. The Abraham Lincoln Battalion, however, had many volunteers who had a first or second-hand experience of migration.[13] This means that their parents, or grandparents were recent migrants to the country. So much so that even one in five were not yet US citizens.[14] The by far biggest takeaway is the wide variety of cross-ethnic identities found within the Abraham Lincoln Battalion. As this is unlike any other battalion. A possible motive is present here that will be expanded upon in the next section. But to state it here, migrants from countries such as Italy may want to travel to Spain to stop the spread of fascism. As it may have been a cause of them leaving the country, thus giving us a tie into a

[12] Carroll, *From Guernica to Human Rights*, 20.
[13] Tremlett, *The International Brigades*, 231.
[14] Tremlett, *The International Brigades*, 231.

possible motive. In the next section, the focus will be on the individuals themselves, which will expand upon this idea.

Volunteers in both the Abraham Lincoln Battalion and the British Battalion

As the previous section mentioned, this section begins with the idea of diversity within the Abraham Lincoln Battalion, then the British, and then a combination of the two. As mentioned, minority groups and cross-ethnic identities led to many different individuals volunteering. An example is how Cuban-Americans had their section and participated in various battles.[15] Italian-Americans were another group that volunteered early on. Many had fled their country in fear of the fascist dictatorship that had risen in Italy. These Italian-Americans joined the Italian-speaking Garibaldi Battalion or the Abraham Lincoln Battalion.[16] In this, we see the ongoing conflict between refugees and those fleeing their home countries. This could be a possible motivation to fight back against those who are persecuting them. Further research would have to be taken into the accounts of the refugees and volunteers who fit such a category.

Another major group that had representation was Jewish Americans. The presence of Jewish volunteers is something that surprised me, not to mention the large number of them in the volunteers. Fraser Ottanelli states how it gave them the chance to offer armed resistance against both European Fascism and Nazi anti-Semitism.[17] The fact of the matter is that around 25 percent of volunteers had been born into Jewish homes.[18] Through this, we can see a pattern being presented. This is because the volunteers have had a common interest in fighting against fascist

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[15] Tremlett, The International Brigades, 234.
[16] Fraser Ottanelli, "Anti-Fascism and the Shaping of National and Ethnic Identity: Italian American Volunteers in the Spanish Civil War," *Journal of American Ethnic History* 27, no. 1 (2007), 23.
[17] Ottanelli, "Anti-Fascism and the Shaping of National and Ethnic Identity," 23.
[18] Robert A. Rosenstone, "The Men of the Abraham Lincoln Battalion," *The Journal of American History* 54, no. 2 (1967): 327–38, https://doi.org/10.2307/1894809, 332.

actors in Spain. The ideology of anti-fascism is a factor that united the English-speaking battalions on the Republican side.

The volunteers' backgrounds as individuals are tied to ethnic origin, lifestyle, and occupation. The "average American volunteer" was in his twenties and had lived in an industrial or urban center where labor unions and radical political parties were active.[19] From students to sailors, occupation offered an outlet for political reasoning to influence the volunteer's choices. Recruitment was organized around ideologies favorable to Communist thought. Around 70 percent of recruits were members of the Communist Party or one of its affiliated organizations.[20] It would be hard to argue that a general belief in left-leaning political thought wasn't present in some form. Once in Spain, volunteers were listed under the political affiliation of "Anti-Fascists".[21] The category is a large spectrum, so it's hard to gauge the exact extent of political leaning, but it's pretty clear they all allied against fascism. On top of this, most of the volunteers were involved in labor unions or political movements.[22] Ideology played a major role here, uniting a wide range of left-leaning beliefs against fascism. Robert Rosenstone states that "American men were joining the struggle in reaction to the world around them."[23] I agree with this statement, as this "unified front" was made in response to the threat of fascism. The general idea of fighting against it aboard was a motivating factor and a drive for Americans to volunteer.

British Battalion volunteers were not all from Britain itself. Anyone who spoke English could be put into the British or American Battalions. Some of these members were not even in combat roles. Donald Gallie, an ambulance driver, had come to Spain with a Scottish Medical

[19] Rosenstone, "The Men of the Abraham Lincoln Battalion," 328.
[20] Carroll, *From Guernica to Human Rights*, 43.
[21] Rosenstone, "The Men of the Abraham Lincoln Battalion," 335.
[22] Rosenstone, "The Men of the Abraham Lincoln Battalion," 337.
[23] Rosenstone, "The Men of the Abraham Lincoln Battalion," 338.

Aid Unit.[24] These non-combat roles are often overlooked but should be studied more in-depth. As we can see, Donald Gallie was Scottish, and many other volunteers were from Scotland as well. Scotland had sent over 500 volunteers to Spain.[25] Data from the International Brigade archives in London and Moscow provide us with this information. Wales, Scotland, Ireland, and different English cities had varying amounts of volunteers. Ship-building areas of Tyneside and Teesside sent a large number of volunteers.[26] This shows us a strong link between the shipping industry and the Communist Party.[27] Wales, for example, had a strong mining industry, which could relate to the Asturian uprising that happened in Spain. This occurred in a mining region and was an uprising caused by political tensions. An influence between support for the uprising may have led to increased volunteers or the likelihood of support for the miners. Ireland or Irish volunteers are harder to pin down. As self-identity was played down, many Irish volunteers left the British Battalion due to internal conflict.[28] This was due to the political and cultural divide. Outside of the British Isles, volunteers came from other places that were a part of the Commonwealth. We see diversity wasn't only found in the Abraham Lincoln Battalion, but also in the British.

Once again ideology played a role. A clear connection is between dockyard workers and the Communist Party.[29] Volunteers were recruited through Communist Party offices on King Street in London. A quiz took place on politics and warfare. This process of vetting the recruits saw that the majority were communists. With around two-thirds of the volunteers being

[24] Nina Stevens, *The Road to Madrid: Diary of Donald Gallie, Member of the Scottish Medical Aid Unit, Serving in the Spanish Civil War, September - December 1936*, 1st ed. (Eastbourne, England: Sussex Academic Press, 2019), 14.
[25] Baxell, *British Volunteers*, 20.
[26] Baxell, *British Volunteers*, 20.
[27] Baxell, *British Volunteers*, 20.
[28] Baxell, *British Volunteers*, 21.
[29] Baxell, *British Volunteers*, 20.

considered communists.[30] Although this amount of communists is misleading in terms of actual belief. As a significant proportion of volunteers simply joined the party to ease their path to Spain.[31] This may make one doubt the strength of ideology. However, this is just under Communist beliefs, not left-leaning or "Anti-Fascist" beliefs. The common, unifying objective of volunteers seemed to be a fight against the spread of fascism.[32] This was mentioned previously with the Abraham Lincoln Battalion as well.[33] A primary account references the visible spread of fascism. Which led volunteers to become opponents of fascism. British Volunteer Fred Thomas, explains his experience in interacting with Oswald Mosely's fascist movement in Britain.[34] Seeing the spreading and fighting that happened as a result. So it is safe to conclude ideology played a major role in the English-speaking volunteers' motivation to fight. Tom Buchanan noted, "It is easier to define what volunteers were fighting against than what they were fighting for."[35] Another historian, Richard Baxell, also notes this recurring theme of fighting against fascism.[36] I am inclined to agree, as a clear pattern can be seen. The Spanish Civil War became an internationally reported conflict. It had direct ties to the world at large, with all the factors that caused the conflict being related to international events. We see the global rise of fascism and communism, the spreading of these ideologies, the Great Depression, and religious tensions. Even the Nationalists themselves saw the conflict as a crusade against communism, or at least stopping the spread of communism.[37] The fundamental ideological presence of stopping fascism, and supporting one's ideology, is clear in this conflict. Such ideological focus even led to an

[30] Tremlett, The International Brigades, 212.
[31] Tremlett, The International Brigades, 212.
[32] Baxell, *British Volunteers*, 30.
[33] Rosenstone, "The Men of the Abraham Lincoln Battalion," 338.
[34] Fred Thomas, To Tilt at Windmills: A Memoir of the Spanish Civil War (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 1996), accessed November 30, 2023, ProQuest Ebook Central, 5.
[35] Tom Buchanan, *Britain and the Spanish Civil War* (Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 127-28.
[36] Baxell, *British Volunteers*, 31.
[37] Baxell, *British Volunteers*, 26.

internal conflict. “May Days” is an event I mentioned in the last chapter, it saw the anarchists fight the communists and the Republican government.[38] Orwell notes the conflict against the anarchists, specifically from the viewpoint of a POUM militia soldier.[39] The POUM was mentioned in the last chapter, as it stands for the Workers’ Party of Marxist Unification. In Spanish it is known as *Partido Obrero de Unificación Marxista*. Outside of bigger conflicts, we also see the obsession with fascist subversion and an internal enemy. Political dissidents were dealt with harshly. In Republican-held territories the establishment of reeducation camps even took place, which were made for those charged with these crimes.[40] This shows the importance of ideology within the British Battalion as well as the Abraham Lincoln Battalion. The two are tied together regarding ideology belief, making them perfect for this analysis.

English-speaking Republican Volunteers’ Impact in Jarama

So what was the impact of English-speaking Republican volunteers and what did they accomplish? Put simply, they had a measurable effect on the war effort. In terms of measuring the effect of the war effort, I will mainly focus on basic factors. These factors are the number of soldiers in the conflict, participation in battles, and general combat experience. In terms of manpower, the combined strength of English-speaking volunteers within Republican forces numbered around 5,300 maximum. This amount is reached by adding together the total estimates of each battalion. Even individually these battalions outnumbered the largest, and only, English-speaking Battalion within the Nationalists of 700.[41] The total number of Nationalist English-speaking volunteers outside of this battalion is negligible. As they were made up of

[38] Zimmer, “The Other Volunteers,” 36.
[39] George Orwell, *Homage to Catalonia* (New York, NY: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1952).
[40] Rob Stradling, “English-Speaking Units of the International Brigades: War, Politics and Discipline,” *Journal of Contemporary History* 45, no. 4 (2010), 757.
[41] Keene, *Fighting for Franco*, 115.

individuals rather than a complete battalion. Already we can see the difference in impact based on manpower.

Both the British and Abraham Lincoln Battalion participated in campaigns in four major battles. I focus on analyzing the Battle of Jarama, which shows the impact of English-speaking volunteers. It was the first major battle fought with both Battalions present at the same time. The Irish Battalion, the main Nationalist English-speaking Battalion, was also present in the conflict. Therefore this specific battle presents a unique opportunity to measure the Battalions against one another. Furthermore, the Battle of Jarma lets us see the volunteers at the beginning of the conflict when they were most inexperienced. The battle will set a general trend of misfortune and misery, and show the horrors of war. At the same time, it also shows the ability of Republican forces to triumph against a stronger enemy.

The Battle of Jarama occurred after the Nationalists attacked the Republicans. The objective of the rebel offensive was to the southeast of Madrid. It sought to cut a vital road linking the capital city of Madrid with Valencia.[42] Nationalist troops staged an operation and successfully sneaked across the front line. The British Battalion advanced and came under fire in a surprise attack. The intel given on the location was lacking, and the soldiers mentioned not being given maps of the area.[43] Command had no idea about the rebel crossing over a nearby river, and the British retreated to a hill, later called "Suicide Hill" by surviving volunteers.[44] The map below is from Baxell's work and shows the battlefield of Jarama (see Fig. 1), where "Suicide Hill" is labeled in the center.[45]

[42] Baxell, *British Volunteers*, 68.
[43] Baxell, *British Volunteers*, 70.
[44] Baxell, *British Volunteers*, 70.
[45] Richard Baxell, "The rebels' attempt to encircle Madrid," February 1937, *British Volunteers in the Spanish Civil War*, 69.

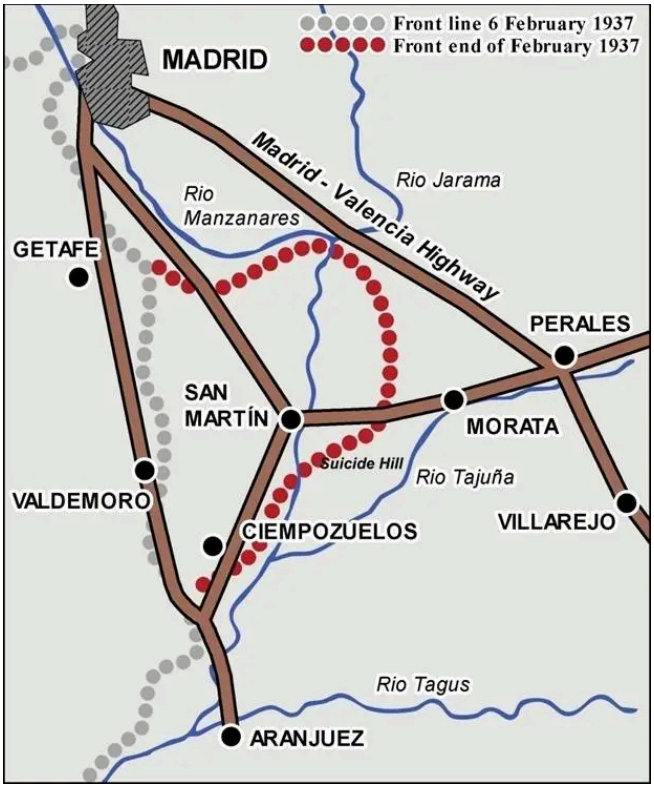


Figure 1. This is a map showing the Battle of Jarama. It is from *British Volunteers in the Spanish Civil War,* pg 69.

The British were up against the elite regulars of Franco's Army of Africa. Jason Gurney discusses this lack of knowledge and describes how the Moorish infantry moved across the country without presenting a target.[46] This shows the skill of their opponent, which contrasted heavily with the British Battalion's inexperience. As the soldiers stood up to get a better shot, it left them silhouetted by the skyline. The British volunteers presented an easy target for the Moorish infantry. A firsthand account writes how a Scottish sergeant sobbed out loud and shouted at the men, "Get them off the skyline!"[47] The British Battalion was plagued throughout

[46] Baxell, *British Volunteers*, 70.
[47] Tremlett, *The International Brigades*, 218.

the war with inexperience, which lessened as it went on obviously. Sadly these lessons were costly, as in this first battle around 136 were killed.[48]

This inexperience is further highlighted by the training of the British beforehand. John Tunnah, a volunteer and veteran said, "Of course, many of the problems with training were a result of the well-documented limitations of quantity and quality of Republican arms."[49] Guns and ammunition were limited, and therefore no training in firing the weapons could occur most of the time. Eddie Brown, an anti-fascist activist from Scotland stated, "Ye couldnae waste ammunition. We had none to waste."[50] This critical situation was a tough position to be in and only worsened the situation for the British battalion.

The style of combat seen at this battle and many others was that of modern warfare at the time. Bombardments rained down on the battalion. Inexperience not only came from the volunteers, who were mostly not veterans but also from the Spanish military staff. Spain had not been in World War I and therefore was being harshly taught the lessons from it. In just 8 hours of fighting, the British Battalion was reduced to half-strength from injuries and losses.[51] The display here is the general inexperience of the soldiers against the experienced Nationalist forces. Yet, the British Battalion held their position on the front.

We see Tom Wintringham refuse an order to attack with all his men in an offensive. Wintringham was a veteran of World War I. So he knew the tactics of the time and was experienced. Instead of following this suicide attack, he led a fake attack with forty men.[52] Wintringham stated in his account that he had expected the orders to be decided upon democratically, but instead, they were suddenly forced to attack.[53] A general lack of supply also

[48] Baxell, *British Volunteers*, 77.
[49] Baxell, *British Volunteers*, 71.
[50] Baxell, *British Volunteers*, 71.
[51] Tremlett, *The International Brigades*, 222.
[52] Tremlett, *The International Brigades*, 223.
[53] Tremlett, *The International Brigades*, 223.

plagued the battalion throughout the battle. A machine-gun company within the Battalion was without ammunition due to being given the wrong caliber. This surprisingly proved advantageous as Moorish troops rushed forward over the top of "Suicide Hill", thinking the British had no machine guns on a section of the battlefield.[54] This was due to the machine guns not having fired up until this point. As previously stated, some of the machine guns lack proper ammunition. So some of the machine gun companies with machine guns were unable to use them. The rebels were forced to pull back upon taking losses from the machine guns which suddenly came to life.

These two events help illustrate the British Battalion within the Battle of Jarama. They fought hard but saw large losses. Of the around 500 who had gone into the battle, a conservative estimate suggests that 136 lost their lives.[55] A similar number were wounded, and at least 50 quit.[56]

Some themes can be seen in the British Battalion's efficiency through this battle. The first is a lack of training and experience. This caused unnecessary casualties in the battle. Included is the lack of developed intel and knowledge. Resources and equipment were of poor quality, with many lacking proper training. Despite this, they stayed in the battle and held their position. Which was their main objective, thus showing their tenuous nature on the battlefield.

Abraham Lincoln's Battalion at the Battle of Jarama

The Abraham Lincoln Battalion was in a similar situation to that of the British. Even before the battle had begun, trucks carrying men and equipment took a wrong turn and were shot

[54] Baxell, *British Volunteers*, 73.
[55] Baxell, *British Volunteers*, 77.
[56] Baxell, *British Volunteers*, 77.

off the road.[57] The Battalion was ordered into a reserve position to start off and then received its first bombardment the following morning. The Battalion was sent on multiple attacks. Alongside them were the previously mentioned Cuban section. The Cuban section saw success in attacking a machine gun position but took losses. A second attack took place on a hill called *El Pingarron*. Forty of the newcomers, who had never even shot a rifle, were in the attack as it became a suicidal assault.[58] The Battalion were given the same orders as the British: to push forward and attack the enemy's lines. This all-out attack was dangerous, and unlike other units, the Abraham Lincoln Battalion followed these orders. This was likely due to the leaders of the British Battalion having seen the worst strategies of the First World War, which seemed to be what their commanders in the International Brigades wanted to imitate.[59] This charge led to chaos as the command passed rapidly through several different volunteers. One of these volunteers admitted when given leadership after his commander died, said that he, "knew about military things a fuck!"[60]

Here is a similar situation to the British Battalion. Both the British and Americans lacked the training necessary for combat. With the men not knowing even how to shoot a rifle in some cases. The Americans likely followed the orders of the ill-fated attack due to this inexperience. We do see that not all battalions were equal in experience. The British seemed to have more veterans in positions of power, this enabled them to make decisions against the leadership of the International Brigades. This wouldn't be the experience of the Americans, which caused the unnecessary loss of human lives in a suicidal charge. Through both of the battalions, we can see the major impacts present within this battle, even without them having a massive amount of

[57] Tremlett, *The International Brigades*, 223.
[58] Tremlett, *The International Brigades*, 235.
[59] Tremlett, *The International Brigades*, 236.
[60] Tremlett, *The International Brigades*, 236.

volunteers. They not only held their lines but saw massive losses. I consider this impactful in relation to the war effort.

In conclusion of this chapter, we see in both cases of the Abraham Lincoln Battalion and the British Battalion the unifying factor at play is the fight against the spread of fascism. No matter the ideology, this idea is present in the volunteers. An underpinning of left-leaning ideology is present in both battalions. This connection of belief leads to the conclusion that this was a major factor in the volunteer's mindset. Depending on the individuals this mindset could be related to their ethnic origin. Some of the ethnic origins mentioned are Italian Americans and those of Jewish descent who joined the Abraham Lincoln Battalion. Even with the British, some were more involved than others, battling fascists at home in the streets. Each individual had their reasons, but the idea of fighting against fascism appealed to many of the volunteers. This was a major factor in getting volunteers to fight.

In terms of accomplishments, the Battle of Jarama shows us a shared link. Both battalions lacked experience and training which proved fatal to many young volunteers. Yet their sacrifices did stop the advancing rebel army and successfully allowed the Republicans to hold their objective. I venture to say this did have a major impact on the war effort. The amount of combat seen and holding under attack does show a clear impact. The manpower was enough to hold and impact the battle in a meaningful way. This doesn’t include the other battles that the battalions both fought in later on. However, this logically only increased with time. As both battalions gained more experience and fought more battles. These battalions only increased the positive gains for the Republican war effort.

Chapter 3:
Nationalist English-speaking Volunteers

This final chapter focuses on English-speaking volunteers who fought for the Nationalists during the Spanish Civil War. This group of volunteers sparked this whole research question and essay. The chapter structure mirrors the discussion of Republican English-speaking volunteers in the previous chapter. Firstly, I have divided these volunteers into two groups. These are the Irish Battalion and the Spanish Foreign Legion. The Irish Battalion was a part of the Foreign Legion, but I decided to divide it for simplicity's sake. This chapter will begin with the Spanish Foreign Legion and then into the more specific Irish Battalion. The same series of questions will be asked about these volunteers. These questions are about who these volunteers were and about their associated battalions. This includes motivations and the backgrounds of the individuals. Finally, to finish, we will look at the impact and accomplishments of the volunteers.

My argument is that the main motivating factor of the volunteers is ideology. Depending on whether the volunteer sees communism or fascism as a threat determines which side they supported. In addition, the Republican volunteers did have more of an impact on the war effort. But Nationalist English-speaking volunteers are still worth viewing. Their voice and experiences should not be neglected as they show us how volunteers from many different political beliefs can end up fighting in a war. It shows us as historians that history isn't dominated completely by a single side or narrative, but rather the complexity of the past.

The Spanish Foreign Legion was a main part of Nationalist forces in the Spanish Civil War. The Legion was created in January 1920 and saw its first recruits on the 20th of September 1920. The leader was Lieutenant Colonel José Millán Astray, a professional soldier and an *africanista* (a Spaniard in favor of Morocco's colonization). He was sent to provide disciplined,

front-line soldiers for Spain's colonial wars.[1] The Spanish Foreign Legion was permitted by King Alfonso XIII and had a main training base four miles outside of Ceuta. The Legion, despite its name, was mainly made from Spanish volunteers. A small amount were foreigners, and this shows in the firsthand account of Peter Kemp. Kemp was a Nationalist volunteer and rarely met other English volunteers, but the few he did meet provides a perspective into the rarity of English speakers within the Foreign Legion.[2]

The Legion based a lot of its values on those of its founder, José Millán Astray. These include honor, obedience, loyalty, and fervent Catholicism. Lieutenant Colonel José Millán Astray even had a fixation on death and a warrior code.[3] An example was the slogan, "Long live death", and how the Legionaries referred to themselves as the "betrothed of death".[4] As can be seen, the Legion was an elite military force.

An important figure who was a member and then also commanded the Legion was Francisco Franco. The Legion was known for its violence. This was called "white terror" and occurred in response to towns that had perpetrated acts of torture, incarceration, and murder against associated members of right-wing or conservative organizations.[5] This happened in the Spanish Civil War, but it can be seen even earlier in response to the Asturian uprising. The Asturian uprising occurred in October 1934, and the government called upon the Legion to stop it. The Asturian uprising was a strike that turned into an attempt to overthrow the Spanish Republic's conservative government in 1934. The uprising was incited by the perceived fascist threat from the recently elected government. The repression of the revolt was violent and showcased the brutal tactics of the Legion, this event further divided Spain before the beginning

[1] José E. Alvarez, The Spanish Foreign Legion in the Spanish Civil War, 1936, 1st ed. (Columbia, MO: University of Missouri Press, 2016), 3.
[2] Kemp, *Mine Were of Trouble*.
[3] Alvarez, *The Spanish Foreign Legion*, 3.
[4] Alvarez, *The Spanish Foreign Legion*, 3.
[5] Alvarez, *The Spanish Foreign Legion*, 2-3.

of the Civil War.[6] We can see fully the nature of the Legion. The Legion was an elite and brutal fighting force that produced hardened warriors. The historian José Álvarez brings up the importance of this military organization, as having an elite military organization with prior combat experience is important in war.[7] So with the background of the Legion, how does the Irish Battalion fit into the picture?

The Irish Battalion was an additional battalion within the Spanish Foreign Legion. These were combined with other battalions into what was called *Banderas*. The name itself means banners or flags, and was a term for the grouping of these battalions. At the beginning of the war, only six were present, but by 1939 they totaled twenty.[8] The Irish were the fifteenth of these but wouldn't see the war to completion. The Irish Battalion, as well as all the Battalions from both sides of the conflict, could have an entire essay written about them. As they all have their own unique and compelling history. The Irish Battalion totaled around 700 men who arrived in Spain.[9] Eoin O'Duffy was their leader and was a part of Irish politics. On the 13th of August in 1933, he attempted to mirror Mussolini's march on Rome but failed.[10] This resulted in his being banned by the government.[11] He then attempted to gain some power back by leaving the conservative party, to split it up. This failed as well resulting in him being ostracized from the rest.[12] Newsinger states how it seems likely that after the failure, O'Duffy likely wanted to rekindle the spotlight by having a volunteer army fight for the Nationalists.[13] I agree with this statement, as I believe Kemp would as well. As Peter Kemp, wrote about General O'Duffy and

[6] Alvarez, *The Spanish Foreign Legion*, 9.
[7] Alvarez, *The Spanish Foreign Legion*, 1.
[8] Keene, *Fighting for Franco,* 29.
[9] Keene, *Fighting for Franco,* 115.
[10] John Newsinger, "Blackshirts, Blueshirts, and the Spanish Civil War," *The Historical Journal* 44, no. 3 (2001): 840.
[11] Newsinger, "Blackshirts, Blueshirts, and the Spanish Civil War," 840.
[12] Newsinger, "Blackshirts, Blueshirts, and the Spanish Civil War," 840.
[13] Newsinger, "Blackshirts, Blueshirts, and the Spanish Civil War," 840.

had a lack of respect towards him. Kemp described O'Duffy as "a man who knew nothing of soldiering and was prepared to learn nothing", Kemp even commented on O'Duffy's method of promotion based on ideological loyalty rather than skill.[14] It seems pretty clear that O'Duffy was heavily driven by ideological beliefs.

The Irish Battalion was able to get a decent amount of volunteers and attention due to Ireland's stance on the civil war. At first, the Irish reaction to Spain was vague, even neutral, but this changed in response to various killings that occurred in Spain against Catholics. This could be due to the association with Catholics and the Nationalists. These massacres occurred throughout the war, mainly happening in the beginning, and occurred from both sides. Although the victims differed in terms of class, occupation, and political association. Around 50,000 executions took place in the Republican rear guard, of which more than 6,000 were members of the Catholic clergy.[15] These massacres vary in methods, ranging from mock trials to straight execution.[16] According to Juilo de la Cueva, this wasn't a case of personal revenge, but rather punishment of an entire class that was regarded as the enemy.[17] These killings caused problems for the Republican government as well as a general uproar from the Catholic community worldwide.[18] Since Ireland was Catholic, this drove them to be wary of supporting the Republic. For Ireland, it seems the concern was focused on the plight of the Spanish Catholic Church.[19] So religion played a big role in swaying the opinion of Ireland.

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[14] Kemp, *Mine Were of Trouble,* 69.
[15] Julius Ruiz, *The 'Red Terror' and the Spanish Civil War: Revolutionary Violence in Madrid*, 1st English ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), doi:10.1017/CBO9781107294349, 1-2.
[16] Julio de la Cueva, "Religious Persecution, Anticlerical Tradition and Revolution: On Atrocities against the Clergy during the Spanish Civil War," *Journal of Contemporary History* 33, no. 3 (1998): 355–69, http://www.jstor.org/stable/261121, 356.
[17] Cueva, "Religious Persecution, Anticlerical Tradition and Revolution: On Atrocities against the Clergy during the Spanish Civil War," 356.
[18] Ruiz, *The 'Red Terror' and the Spanish Civil War,* 1-2.
[19] Bell, "Ireland and the Spanish Civil War," 142.

In terms of the Irish Battalion, one of the main features seems to be religion and ideology. In the upcoming section, we will look directly at the members of the Irish Battalion. This is too understand if religion did in fact play a factor, or if it was something else such as adventure. Could the battalion members have just been fascists, like their leader O'Duffy? Or are they simply being grouped into it based on the political leanings of said leader?

Irish Battalion Volunteers and Performance

The volunteers for the Irish Battalion wrote a decent amount about their experiences. This provides us with some information on a large number of volunteers. Richard Stradling, for example, interviewed multiple survivors and indicated that religion was the main motivating factor, with the adventure being placed second.[20] This project provides us with primary information, alongside the memoirs written by members of the Battalion. The volunteers generally all had some similarities which helped point us in the correct direction. Many were from rural Ireland rather than larger towns or cities. Seamus Mackee, a volunteer, divided the volunteers into two groups. These were ex-Blueshirts and the rest who he said were, "ordinary decent young Irishmen deeply affected by Catholic teaching."[21] The Blueshirts or *Na Léinte Gorma*, were a paramilitary organization in Ireland. The ideology was a mixture of right wing ideas. Mackee was nineteen and had grown up in a lower-class family. After finishing his schooling and being in between jobs, he ended up being approached by a recruiter and agreed to travel to Spain.[22]

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[20] Keene, *Fighting for Franco,* 119.
[21] Keene, *Fighting for Franco,* 120.
[22] Seamus MacKee, *I Was a Franco Soldier* (London: United Editorial Ltd., 1938), 9; Judith Keene, *Fighting for Franco: International Volunteers in Nationalist Spain During the Spanish Civil War* (London: Bloomsbury Publishing Plc, 2007), 120.

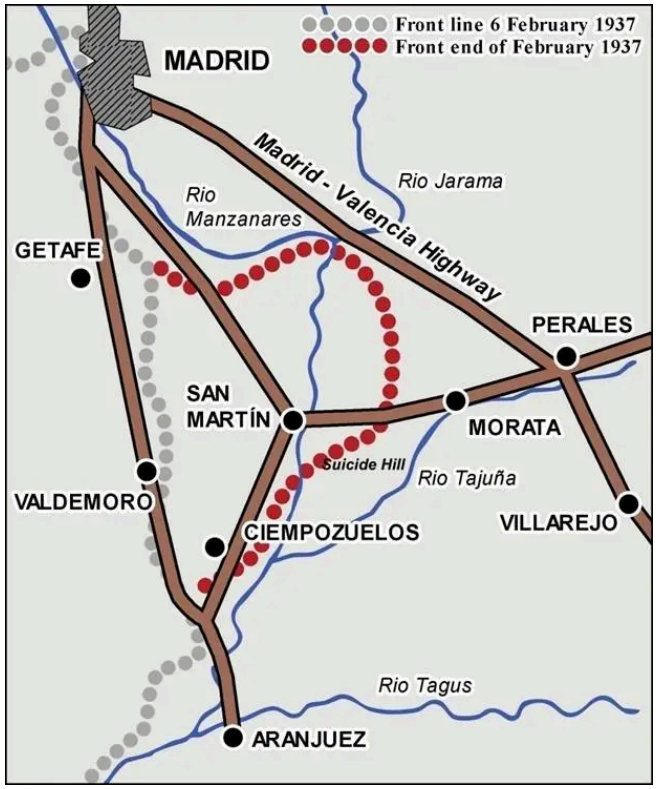
Religion did play a role within the Irish Battalion. Religion is similar to an ideology. It should be noted that right-leaning politics also played a role. The Battalion held ex-members of the Blueshirt movement. O'Duffy himself and his command staff were all influenced by these politics. The expedition seems to be rooted in O'Duffy's desire for the revival of the Blueshirts. Individually, however, the members had a combination of ideologies. These were both political and religious. These interviews and firsthand accounts are likely biased and could be trying to downplay elements of the Blueshirts. However, it still stands to reason that ideology played a role. Whether religious or political doesn't impact my argument significantly, as it only matters that it is in the form of an ideology.

The performance of the Irish Battalion left a lot to be desired. Keene states how historians such as Fearghal McGarry and Robert Stradling argue the exact nature of the brigade and its history.[23] Stradling for example attempts to figure out whether it was ill-fated and comical, or that it has suffered 'sixty years of unsympathetic public comment' and 'taproom ridicule'.[24] It is a combination of the two factors. The Battalion ended up crammed below the decks of a German ship before arriving in Lisbon. Upon arriving, the men got drunk and ended up causing trouble within the town.[25] The events of the Irish Bridge are described to Peter Kemp by Lieutenants FitzPatrick and Nagle. These two were already in the Foreign Legion but were transferred to serve under O'Duffy. Lieutenant Lawler, a volunteer from Ireland, informed Kemp about the Battalion's ill-fated journey as well. The Irish volunteers were not fed when they arrived in Spain and then once again got drunk. Then one of the men, as described by Lawler, vomited

[23] Keene, *Fighting for Franco,* 115.
[24] Keene, *Fighting for Franco,* 115-116.
[25] Keene, *Fighting for Franco,* 120.

down the neck of an old Spanish general in the middle of their national anthem.[26] This chain of events is hard to not find somewhat comical as well as ill-fated.

This misfortunate followed the Battalion to the battlefield, as they were sent to the Jarama front. The train ride itself was only supposed to take 5 hours but ended up totaling 26 hours. The Spaniards accompanying the Irish were unfamiliar with the region and got lost, until finding a small boy who gave them directions. No food was waiting once they arrived, and the following morning they were ordered to occupy trenches at Ciempozuelos on the Jarama front.[27] As previously mentioned the British Battalion was present at Jarama along with the Abraham Lincoln Battalion. Below is the same map (see Fig 1.), which to the southwest of "Suicide Hill" shows Ciempozuelos.[28]



[26] Kemp, *Mine Were of Trouble,* 70.
[27] Keene, *Fighting for Franco*, 123.
[28] Richard Baxell, "The rebels' attempt to encircle Madrid," February 1937, *British Volunteers in the Spanish Civil War*, 69.

Figure 1. This is a map showing the Battle of Jarama. It is from *British Volunteers in the Spanish Civil War,* pg 69.

The battalion came under fire from a friendly unit of Falangists from the Canary Islands who had just arrived at the front. The Falangists, as previously stated, were a political ideology of fascism, but with Spanish characteristics. According to Irish accounts, after the friendly fire incident,the Falangists lost approximately 11, 40, and even half of their men.[29]

The trenches themselves were poorly constructed, and the Irish complained about the conditions. The Irish stated that the Spaniards had not constructed proper trenches, as they were too shallow and not in a zig-zag pattern.[30] Peter Kemp also mentions this lack of knowledge about trenches being present. He stated the shallow nature of them and the straight line in which they were dug.[31] The end of the Irish Brigade happened after the cries to return home were too insistent from the soldiers. The Irish Battalion voted almost unanimously to return to Ireland. The ill-fated Irish Battalion's time within Spain ended here.

The Spanish Foreign Legion and Volunteers

The Spanish Foreign Legion was, as previously mentioned, mainly made up of Spaniards. Foreigners still were present within its ranks, although exact numbers were difficult to find. This also made finding English-speaking volunteers difficult outside of select sources or memoirs. In the process of research, I found four main accounts from volunteers. The numbers were around 1,000 to 1,500 foreigners in both the Legion and Carlist militias.[32] The only

[29] Keene, *Fighting for Franco*, 124.
[30] Keene, *Fighting for Franco*, 124.
[31] Kemp, *Mine Were of Trouble,* 60.
[32] O'Connor and Piketty, "Introduction – Foreign Fighters and Multinational Armies," 115.

detailed English account I found regarding the Carlist militias was that of Peter Kemp. The Nationalists do have figures that show there were around 67 foreigners from 13 countries in the Legion. This increased to 1,248 from 37 countries by the end of the war.[33] The growth here is pretty significant in terms of receiving volunteers.

Research from others would be required to find the exact number of individuals who were English-speaking within the Legion. In the various memoirs and secondary sources gathered in my research, major volunteers with work written about them numbered five in total. Frank Thomas was a Welsh protestant volunteer. Vincent Patricia was an Italian-American volunteer. Rupert Bellvile was a young Englishman who volunteered. Nugent Bull was a religious Australian who volunteered too. Lastly was Peter Kemp who I have already mentioned. Besides these are the two Lieutenants FitzPatrick and Nangle, who were in the Legion before being transferred to the Irish Battalion.[34] Another volunteer was in the medical field, an English girl named Pip Scott-Ellis, who served as a nurse with the Nationalist armies and worked in field hospitals.[35] Being a volunteer nurse is outside of the scope of my research but shows the prevalence of volunteers for all fields, not just combat roles. These are the few names I was able to definitively conclude were volunteers within the Nationalist forces.

The reasons behind why these individuals volunteered are in a similar variety to their Republican counterparts. Frank Thomas was a traveling salesman in Wales and failed out of school. Likely looking for adventure, a job, or a combination of the two, he traveled to Spain. After trying the professional soldier's life and seeing the harsh treatment firsthand, he gravitated toward other foreigners. These included a Hungarian, some Frenchman, a Czecholsavak, and a

[33] David Malet, Foreign Fighters: Transnational Identity in Civic Conflicts (New York, 2013), https://doi.org/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780199939459.001.0001, 116.
[34] Kemp, *Mine Were of Trouble,* 69.
[35] Kemp, *Mine Were of Trouble,* 149.

White Russian veteran.[36] While in the Legion, Thomas was injured and smuggled away by the Irish Battalion. The exact reasons he quit appear to be a mixture of the harsh reality of combat, mental health, and the Legion itself losing its "luster" in his eyes.[37] The motivation seems to be that of adventure, and upon seeing warfare firsthand, Thomas successfully escaped from the conflict.

Vincent Patricia was an Italian-American volunteer who wrote in a magazine article about his experiences. He ended up fighting on the side of the Nationalists and also the Italians within Ethiopia. Patriarca developed a love for aviation and sought to get his pilot license. Unfortunately lessons in the United States cost around two thousand dollars and required 20-50 solo hours.[38] Instead, he got training at Italian Air Schools, traveling to Italy to enroll in the program. Eventually, he volunteered as a pilot against Ethiopia and then found himself escorting Franco's Army of Africa.[39] He did see combat and successfully shot down two planes by his account.[40] In Patricia's case, the motivation was based on adventure and an opportunity to receive training in flight school.

Another flying aficionado was Rupert Bellville, a young Englishman who immediately joined up with a Falangist unit at the start of the war.[41] He became disillusioned due to atrocities on both sides and found himself drifting around Spain. He also met Peter Kemp. Bellville appeared in world news after traveling to an airfield in Santander. He and a friend brought crates of sherry and brandy, expecting to greet Nationalists that had captured this airfield.[42]

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[36] Keene, *Fighting for Franco,* 102.
[37] Vincent Patriarca , "Two Wars in One Year," *Cavalcade Magazine*, May 1937.
[38] Patriarca , "Two Wars in One Year,".
[39] Patriarca , "Two Wars in One Year,".
[40] Patriarca , "Two Wars in One Year,".
[41] Keene, *Fighting for Franco,* 96.
[42] Kemp, *Mine Were of Trouble,* 13.

Unfortunately, Bellvile and his friend Ricardo González, had come too early and were taken into Republican custody. The motivation here also seems to be adventure.

Nugent Bull was an Australian volunteer in the Spanish Foreign Legion. He was a tall and fit 29-year-old who was placed into the French-speaking Joan of Arc company.[43] Bull's motivating factor was to defend the Catholic Church from Communism.[44] He took part in the Battle of Teruel at the end of 1937 and eventually suffered a fever and painful swelling from a previous football injury. Bull was then in a Transport Division that took supplies to the frontline. He stayed a part of the war effort until the end, including marching into the Republican capital in 1939. In Judith Keene's analysis, Bull sympathized with the Frenchmens' distrust of Freemasonry. Bull also believed that powerful Jews and Freemasons were behind and controlling the British government.[45] Bull was motivated by a mixture of religion and politics to volunteer for the Nationalists.

The last volunteer to look at is Peter Kemp. Kemp assesses his motives himself, saying how his politics only determined the side he joined.[46] He saw the war as a chance to "go out on his own and learn about himself." The motivating factor for Kemp was a mixture of politics and adventure. His choice on the side to join was influenced by ideology. At this crossroads in his life, he decided to volunteer and outlined his travels throughout his memoir. Kemp had many interactions with other foreign individuals as previously mentioned. His was the only account I was able to find that showed a foreigner in the Carlist militias. He joined the *Requetes* and became a second lieutenant within a cavalry unit. The *Requetes* were a Carlist organization which had militiamen fighting in the Spanish Civil war. After this, he transferred to an infantry

[43] Keene, *Fighting for Franco,* 106.
[44] Keene, *Fighting for Franco,* 108.
[45] Keene, *Fighting for Franco,* 108.
[46] Kemp, *Mine Were of Trouble,* 4.

platoon, where he participated in the battle of Jarama. Kemp joined the Foreign Legion after seeking them out due to their reputation. He describes it as first-class soldiering.[47] Kemp spent the majority of his time within the Spanish Foreign Legion, and this strengthened his previously held opinions about the organization. He took part and was injured in the Battle of Belchite and then in the second Battle of Ebro. In the Battle of Belchite, he even fought against the British Battalion, which was discussed in the previous chapter. While preparing for military leave back to Britain due to injuries, he was invited by General Franco to a private audience. The conversation was about the state of the world, as well as the threat of Communism.[48] Through Peter Kemp, we see many aspects of the common soldier's life during the Spanish Civil War. We see pretty clearly the motivation as tied to ideology. We also see ideology at play within the leader of the Nationalists, Fransico Franco, who focuses on the threat of communism.

In these accounts of individuals, we can see that English-speaking volunteers were indeed present within the Nationalist forces. The Irish Battalion and the Spanish Foreign Legion held volunteers who held an active role in combat. The Irish Battalion, although largely ineffective, did hold a frontline at Jarama for a short time. They didn't achieve as much as their counterpart battalions on the Republican side. The five volunteers we looked at played a role in varying degrees. All fought at some point and saw combat. They all contributed in some way to the war effort. This impact is hard to measure, and the Republican volunteers simply outnumber the volunteers to the Nationalists. In this respect, I am referring to volunteers not sponsored by states such as Germany and Italy.

I conclude that motivation from Nationalist volunteers is more varied than Republican volunteers. In the Irish Battalion, religion and ideology play a role. Adventure as a motivation

[47] Kemp, *Mine Were of Trouble, 82.*
[48] Kemp, *Mine Were of Trouble*, 158.

also played a role. Individuals like O'Duffy were likely trying to gain more political power and clout. The motivation of adventure also played a role for the Foreign Legion. Almost all mention it being a reason in some form. Thomas, Kemp, Patricia, and Bellville were at a crossroads in life. Both Bull and Kemp mention ideology, but Bull is also older then Kemp. Bull was not only driven by ideology but also religious reasons. Patricia sought training for aviation and adventure in the skies. Bellville, and Thomas wanted experience and adventure through the conflict. Ideology seemed to play a role in deciding the specific side to volunteer for. So it still stands that ideology still plays a role, although adventure is also a factor, which may even beat out ideology in some cases. Ideology pushed English-speaking volunteers toward the Nationalists; otherwise, they would have volunteered for the Republicans. Therefore my argument still stands.

All this evidence shows us that the Nationalists, English-speaking volunteers, were driven in some form by ideology, and that's it was the driving factor in determining which side to volunteer for in the Spanish Civil War. Adventure played a much more central role in the eyes of Nationalists. Also, religion is another factor mentioned, especially concerning the Irish.

The impact on the war effort wasn't as major in the Nationalist case. However, they still fought in the conflict. These volunteers are important to the historical context of the Spanish Civil War globally. They provide us with a viewpoint from both foreigners and participants actively fighting in the conflict. It also shows us that supporters from English-speaking countries, no matter the ideology, were willing to volunteer for the conflict.

Conclusion

Throughout this essay, we have explored the nature of the foreign volunteers during the Spanish Civil War. These individuals who volunteered throughout history did so for a variety of reasons—these range from monetary gain to adventure, to beliefs or ideology. A combination of factors caused the outbreak of the conflict. These include factors such as the Great Depression, political extremism, violence, and class struggle. With increasing pressure and tension on all sides, eventually, the Nationalists attempted a coup. This failed and ignited the Spanish Civil War. An aspect of the war was the international context. Actors such as states took it upon themselves to try and restrict intervention. This failed and the Nationalists received a large amount of aid from Germany and Italy. The volunteers in total from Germany numbered around 19,000 while around 72,775 were from Italy. The Soviet Union sent between 1,000 to 1,500 foreigners to the Republican side. With this, foreign volunteers integrated into militias and the Brigades. They numbered around 35,000. We can see the imbalance in supplies and manpower sent to the Nationalists versus the Republicans. All these amounts are in the first chapter. But it fails to answer a more personal question, which is the objective of this paper. That question is why did all these volunteers join the war effort? Specifically in regard to the English-speaking volunteers.

Republican English-speaking volunteers in the Spanish Civil War played a relatively important role in the war effort. Around 2,500 volunteers left Britain to fight in the British Battalion. The Abraham Lincoln Battalion had slightly more volunteers at around 2,800. These volunteers were from a diverse population within Britain and the U.S. The presence of minorities such as those of Jewish descent, Italian Americans, Irish, Australians, and Cubans are a few mentioned. These volunteers were driven by a common sense of motivation. Many joined from

various occupations including students to manual laborers, some young and some old. The common motivating factor found throughout is the common distaste for fascism. It was a united front against the forces of fascism. Infighting occurred based on an individual's ideology. Yet a common belief in left-leaning ideas is present. The fight against fascism proves to be both a unifying factor and a common motivator.

In terms of accomplishments, these battalions were involved in campaigns and stayed active throughout the war. The volunteers took active roles in battles, not just holding out in the reserves. In this essay, the focus was on the Battle of Jarama. This battle saw intense fighting between the inexperienced International Brigades and the hardened Spanish Army of Africa. The holding of the vital road kept the link between Madrid and Valencia, which the rebels wanted to capture. This trial by fire shows us some issues present within the volunteers. A lack of experience and training proved fatal for many of the volunteers. Veterans couldn't teach much with the lack of equipment and numbers. Poor supplies and equipment caused issues in battle. Yet these soldiers held the line, and fought hard throughout the war. They had an impact and fought in campaigns. Whether won or lost, they still fought and impacted the war.

Nationalist English-speaking volunteers in the Spanish Civil War played a less impactful role but still were present. In this writing, we looked at the Spanish Foreign Legion and the Irish Battalion, which the Irish battalion was a part of. The Legion itself attracted around 1,000 to 1,500 foreigners into its numbers. The Irish Battalion of volunteers were from various parts of Ireland. In terms of the Irish, a big motivator was religion. A global point of view was the crimes committed against the Church within Spain. This motivator was first, but shortly behind it was adventure and ideology. The political motivator was present more than religion in those volunteers loyal to the Blueshirt movement. This was started by the leader of the Battalion, Eoin

O'Duffy. O'Duffy had selfish reasons for leading the volunteers into Spain. The Legion and its English-speaking members were more in it for the adventure. Only one member, Nugent Bull, cited politics and religion as motivating factors. The other four were all at a crossroads in their lives. They wanted an "adventure" and sought to find meaning. Joining the war was a step in which they hoped to achieve some direction in life. Only Patricia had a clear goal, which was becoming an aviator. Bellville and Thomas both became disillusioned with the war and the brutality. Kemp commented on the hardships and brutal nature, and condemned it, but stayed in the Foreign Legion until the end.

In terms of the accomplishments of the Nationalist Volunteers, it would be hard to argue it had a massive impact at all. Measuring impact is difficult, as it cannot be completely objective. The amount of volunteers that the Republicans had was much more. The impact was more noticeable. You could look at the Irish Battalion to compare, but even this falls short, not to mention they did little in terms of the war effort. Individual volunteers, like Kemp and Patricia, did achieve a high rank. Kemp directly contributed by commanding troops and making decisions. Patricia piloted a fighter that escorted the Army of Africa into Spain. These individual efforts are important but from a top-down viewpoint; it simply wasn't as impactful. At the end of the day, the Nationalist English-speaking volunteers simply lacked the manpower, and combat length, to be of equal value, in a military aspect to that of their counterparts.

During research, I had hoped to prove that the Nationalist English-speaking volunteers were of equal combat value. I also wanted to discover the reasons behind the volunteers joining the conflict. In terms of combat value, the Nationalist volunteers were simply lacking. The reasons are varied, but the main ones are ideological and adventure. Different groups such as the Irish, valued religion more so, but at the end of the day it depended on the individual.

In no way does this invalidate the experiences of either side or even the sacrifices they made due to their judgment. This point is central to my argument. In the process of research and reading, it was increasingly hard to uncover sources on the subject. More needs to be uncovered about the English-speaking volunteers on the Nationalist's side. I specifically suggest this due to the Republicans having more sources than the Nationalists. It provides us with a larger portion of the narrative. Adding to the conversion about volunteers in any global conflict. It shows how each side can have volunteers. These motives also provide us with a reflection of society and the historical context at the time. Republican volunteers stated the need to stop the spread of fascism. While Nationalist volunteers were more mixed, Franco, for example, stated the need to stop communism. Both had the motivation of adventure and experience. This was more prevalent in cases of Nationalist volunteers. This may be due to the smaller sample size but is worth mentioning nonetheless.

This analysis of both volunteer groups highlights the essential nature of both narratives in comprehending their motivations and experiences in the war. Furthermore, it shows a greater context of the period before WWII. This knowledge of English-speaking volunteers shows us the diverse people who can be united under a common cause. It could even expand to include other cases, both past and present, to help explain why a group may volunteer.

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