Introduction: Making Antifascist War

The International Brigades and Civil-War Spain: The Wider Context

If war's unparalleled ability to tear communities, countries and continents apart is self-evident, it is worth reflecting on the fact that it can also bring them together in ways unimaginable in peacetime. Fighting battles and travelling to unfamiliar places have gone hand-in-hand for almost as long as the historical record has existed, with epic poems like Homer's *Iliad*, classic films like Rossellini's *Paisà* and television shows like the cult favourite *Sharpe* cementing the association in the popular imagination across the world. With the advent of modern mass armies in the early nineteenth century, increasing numbers of soldiers began to be deployed across greater distances than ever before and, in the process, found themselves exposed to people, places and cultures which remained completely out of reach for the vast majority of their civilian counterparts back home – unless, of course, they read the novels or memoirs based on their exploits.[1] If their own diaries are anything to go by, these increasingly literate combatants very often thought, felt and expressed themselves as travellers, with the romantic lure of the unknown continuing to feed into the motivations of their successors throughout the following century of even more globalised warfare.[2] With its illustration of two white soldiers contentedly

[1] On the increased mobility generated by the Napoleonic Wars and some of the encounters which entailed, see Joseph Clarke and John Horne (eds.), *Militarized Cultural Encounters in the Long Nineteenth Century: Making War, Mapping Europe* (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018), 49–74. Spain was the site of some of these encounters, as shown by Gavin Daly in *The British Soldier in the Peninsular War: Encounters with Spain and Portugal, 1808–1814* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013). The role of the armed forces in creating unprecedented opportunities for geographical mobility continued well into the twentieth century, with Eric J. Leed claiming that military service was the 'only form of mass travel the masses could afford' and citing the statistic that, as late as 1958, two-thirds of adult Americans who had been oversees had done so within the armed forces. See Leed, *The Mind of the Traveler: From Gilgamesh to Global Tourism* (New York: Basic Books: 1991), 2.

[2] For the relationship between travel writing and the accounts written by soldiers during the Napoleonic Wars, see Leighton James, 'Travel Writing and Encounters with National "Others" in the Napoleonic Wars', *History Compass*, 7:4 (2009), 1,246–58. On the soldiers

strolling through an orientalised marketplace, the British poster which promised potential recruits to the Great War the chance to 'see the world and get paid for doing it' reminds us that the connections between conflict and mobility have real historical significance, even if we are more used to seeing them fictionalised on the big screen or in the pages of novels.[3]

Whether you get paid for doing it or not, travelling involves a great deal more than seeing other parts of the world. Even the most carefully planned package holiday is, after all, likely to involve some form of engagement with the host culture. Soldiers, however, are not ordinary sightseers. The epithet of 'travellers' has its uses, but it implies a degree of benign passivity which is often incompatible with their status as armed combatants engaged in violent campaigns.[4] The increasingly industrial and ideologically charged wars of the twentieth century succeeded in generating a constant stream of cross-cultural encounters, yet their precise nature varied enormously depending on the circumstances at hand. A brief survey of the Second World War suffices to show that contact could be friendly, peaceful, hostile, violent and practically everything in between depending on the time, place and people involved, with relationships between guests and hosts, conquerors and conquered, liberators and liberated varying from extermination, enslavement and subordination all the way through to negotiation, collaboration and resistance. Often, the fundamental nature of this contact was fiercely disputed at the time and continues to defy simple categorisation decades later, with historians still debating the appropriate terminology to describe the relations which emerged between locals and foreigners throughout Nazi-occupied Europe.[5]

of the First World War thinking of themselves as tourists, see Anna Maguire, *Contact Zones of the First World War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2021), 92. For a consideration of the role of travel in motivating enlistment in the First World War, see Richard White, 'The Soldier as Tourist: The Australian Experience of the Great War', *War & Society*, 5:1 (1987), 63–77.

[3] British Army recruitment poster, 'See the World and Get Paid for Doing It', C. 1920, National Army Museum, 1988.06.40.1, accessible online at https://collection.nam.ac.uk/detail.php?acc=1988–06-40–1, accessed 29 September 2023.

[4] For a discussion of the ways in which soldiers' status as travellers is fundamentally conditioned by their professional responsibilities, see Joseph Clarke and John Horne, 'Introduction: Peripheral Visions – Militarized Cultural Encounters in the Long Nineteenth Century' in Clarke and Horne (eds.), *Militarized Cultural Encounters in the Long Nineteenth Century*, 1–21.

[5] For an excellent overview of these debates in relation to occupied Norway, see Maria Fritsche, 'Spaces of Encounter: Relations between the Occupier and the Occupied in Norway during the Second World War', *Social History*, 45:3 (2020), 360–83. Julia S. Torrie has shown how the German soldiers responsible for the occupation of

It would be difficult to consider all of these diverse forms of wartime contact in the space of a single study. The Spanish Civil War of 1936–1939 nonetheless offers a particularly compelling means of investigating the question of wartime encounters given the sheer breadth of contact which took place, the range of individuals involved and the wider impact it exercised. For three years, a country whose culture, politics and history had been of little interest to most people living beyond its borders played host to an extraordinary cast of journalists, novelists, technicians, poets, filmmakers, soldiers, advisors, agitators and adventurers from across the world who, for all their ideological heterogeneity, were suddenly united in seeing Spain's business as their own. General Francisco Franco, a veteran of Spain's brutal colonial campaigns who wasted no time in taking over the leadership of the Nationalist insurgency launched against the Republic in July 1936, could count on the support of around 700 Irish volunteers, 8,000 Portuguese soldiers, 19,000 German pilots and technical specialists, 78,000 Italian mercenaries, as many as 80,000 Moroccan recruits and a smattering of other fighters who came from elsewhere to fight, as they saw it, for God and Civilization in the Spanish trenches.[6] The embattled Republic, for its part, enjoyed the armed support of the approximately 35,000 multinational volunteers who flocked to the ranks of the

France between 1940 and 1944 experienced quotidian realities of leisure, consumption and even tourism within the enemy territory which bely the standard image of Nazi occupations as being 'warlike and exploitative'. See Torrie, *German Soldiers and the Occupation of France, 1940–1944* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018), 2–14. Following the Nazi defeat, a myth of unified resistance would emerge in many formerly occupied states which glossed over the more uncomfortable realities of intra-national violence and collaboration with foreign forces. See Tony Judt, 'The Past Is Another Country: Myth and Memory in Postwar Europe', *Daedalus*, 121:4 (1992), 83–118.

[6] Foreign support for the Nationalists has been widely researched. For a summary of the role of the Irish Fascists who volunteered for Franco under the leadership of Eoin O'Duffy, see Fearghal McGarry, *Irish Politics and the Spanish Civil War* (Cork: Cork University Press, 1999); for the Portuguese volunteers, see Christopher Othen, *Franco's International Brigades* (London: Reportage Press, 2008), 72–80; for the Germans who served with the 'Condor Legion' and were provided by the Luftwaffe, see Michael Alpert, *Franco and the Condor Legion: The Spanish Civil War in the Air* (London: Bloomsbury, 2019), and for an in-depth study of their relationship with Spaniards, see Stefanie Schüler-Springorum, *La guerra como aventura: La Legión Cóndor en la Guerra Civil Española, 1936–1939* (Madrid: Alianza, 2014). For the Italians, see Javier Rodrigo, 'A Fascist Warfare? Italian Fascism and War Experience in the Spanish Civil War (1936–39)', *War in History*, 26:1 (2019), 86–104; for the Moroccans, see Ali Al Tuma, 'Moros y Cristianos: Religious Aspects of the Participation of Moroccan Soldiers in the Spanish Civil War (1936–1939)', in Bekim Agai, Umar Ryad and Mehdi Sajid (eds.), *Muslims in Interwar Europe: A Transcultural Historical Perspective* (Leiden: Brill, 2016), 151–77. For the often motley collection of multinational volunteers who went to Spain to fight with the Nationalists of their own accord, see the aforementioned work by Othen in addition to Judith Keene, *Fighting For Franco* (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 2001).

now-legendary International Brigades – the subject of this particular book – from some sixty different states.[7]

Of all the reasons for the enduring fascination of the Spanish Civil War, the role of the International Brigades surely ranks amongst the most important.[8] Its members were neither the first nor the only foreigners to face down General Franco's military rebels, with hundreds of volunteers who joined the anarchist, socialist and communist militias which had emerged as a direct result of the rising beating them to the chase. All the same, it would take the creation of a dedicated international fighting force in October 1936 to finally ensure that a fratricidal conflict in what many Europeans still considered to be an irrelevant backwater ceased to be the sole concern of Spaniards and could, instead, be claimed as a crucial episode in the histories of such diverse countries as China, Canada, Cuba, and – until the collapse of the Soviet Union – Communist East Germany, too. 'We who publish this booklet', wrote the authors of a 1948 who's-who of Australian volunteers within the International Brigades which demonstrates this sense of global ownership particularly well, 'feel that theirs is a brave chapter in our Australian history'.[9] A similar attitude underpins the enormous quantity of news articles, history books, television documentaries, public exhibitions and academic articles produced about specific national contingents within the International Brigades by authors often based in the same countries from which they came.

The key to this extraordinary interest lies partly in the international appeal of an equally international military unit, but also in what the individuals within its ranks fought for. As dozens of memorials erected in the volunteers' hometowns remind countless passersby every day, these

[7] The precise numbers of volunteers and the countries they came from has been the subject of debate since the war itself. The figures cited here are taken from Giles Tremlett's *The International Brigades: Fascism, Freedom and the Spanish Civil War* (London: Bloomsbury, 2020), 5–6, which are themselves based on data collected by the International Brigade Commissariat and preserved in the Russian State Archive of Socio-Political History.

[8] Francisco J. Romero Salvadó argues that the 'immense interest' and 'enduring appeal' of the Spanish Civil War would have been impossible had it been a 'purely domestic dispute' in *The Historical Dictionary of the Spanish Civil War* (Lanham, MD: The Scarecrow Press, 2013), 32. In an overview of International Brigade scholarship published up to the year 2004, Manuel Requena Gallego suggested that 'it is perhaps the subject of the Spanish Civil War which has most generated publications' with at least 2,000 titles specifically on the unit, and another 317 which reference them. The figure has certainly gone up since then. See Manuel Requena Gallego, 'Las Brigadas Internacionales: una aproximación historiográfica', *Ayer*, 56 (2004), 13. The bibliography compiled by Fernando Rodríguez de la Torre two years later contains, tellingly, well over a thousand pages. See Rodríguez de la Torre, *Bibliografía de las Brigadas Internacionales y de la participación de extranjeros a favor de la República (1936–1939)* (Albacete: Instituto de Estudios Albacetenses Don Juan Manuel, 2006).

[9] Nettie Palmer, Len Fox, Jim McNeill and Ron Hurd (eds.), *Australians in Spain: Our Pioneers Against Fascism* (Sydney: Current Book Distributors, 1948), 3.

men went to Spain not only to engage in battle with General Francisco Franco but to take up arms in a far wider war against fascism. They identified Hitler and Mussolini's material support for the rebel general in the form of tanks, planes, soldiers and specialists as clear evidence that the reactionary ideology was firmly on the offensive, and agreed that by getting involved on the Spanish front lines they would be able to defend the freedom of workers not only in Madrid but in Melbourne and Moscow, too. Since then, many of their admirers – from the communist dictator Fidel Castro to the Republican senator John McCain – have expressed a sense of ongoing antifascist debt to the International Brigades for fighting, as they have seen it, against one of the greatest tyrannies in world history.[10] The understandable emphasis placed on the volunteers' transcendental struggle has, nonetheless, fed into significant historical blind spots. With few exceptions, the International Brigades' many chroniclers – professional historians included – have treated Spain as a more-or-less incidental backdrop to the main business of fighting the global fascist menace, reducing its members' encounters with the host country to the unenviable status of an inconsequential, if occasionally interesting, sideshow.

Those same historians have, for the most part, been more interested in exploring a now familiar set of questions concerning the volunteers' motivations for enlisting, their assimilation into military life and their role on the front lines. Many also consider their post-war trajectories, often in the form of continuing the antifascist struggle within the context of the even more global, and catastrophic, world war which came on the heels of the conflict in Spain. Although several survey works address the founding of the International Brigades and touch on their relationship with the wider loyalist war effort, a tendency to look inwards towards the multinational military unit rather than outwards towards the social, cultural, political and military context in which it operated has been reinforced by a focus on specific national groupings, often with very little reference to the enormous secondary literature on the Spanish Civil War more broadly.[11] By treating these groups as the vanguards of home-grown

[10] For Fidel Castro, see Víctor Pina Tabío, 'Apoyo internacionalista de Cuba a la república española' in Josep Sánchez Cervelló and Sebastián Agudo (eds.), *Las Brigadas Internacionales: nuevas perspectivas en la historia de la Guerra Civil y del exilio* (Tarragona: publicacions Universitat Rovira i Virgili, 2015), 133; for John McCain, see his own article 'Salute to a Communist', *The New York Times*, 24 March 2016, www.nytimes.com/2016/03/25/opinion/john-mccain-salute-to-a-communist.html, accessed 18 August 2024.

[11] The key survey works are Verle B. Johnston, *Legions of Babel: The International Brigades in the Spanish Civil War* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1967); Rémi Skoutelsky, *Novedad en el frente: Las Brigadas Internacionales en la guerra civil* (Madrid: Temas de Hoy, 2006); César Vidal, *Las Brigadas Internacionales* (Madrid: Espasa, 2006) and Tremlett, *The International Brigades*.

antifascist movements, we become intimately familiar with the names, personalities and experiences of a key cast of characters – the likes of Fred Copeman and Robert Merriman will be familiar to anglophone readers – at the cost of gaining a real sense of the wider war in which they were involved, let alone the millions of Spaniards swept up within its violence.[12]

What follows departs from these familiar approaches by placing the volunteers' contact with Spain at the very centre of its analysis. Whilst a handful of historians have published studies into the relationship between specific groups of volunteers and some of their native hosts, *Making Antifascist War* takes the first detailed look at the rich array of encounters which emerged between the soldiers of all five International Brigades and the people, places and politics of wartime Spain.[13] It does not limit itself to recovering this varied range of experiences for their own sake – tempting though this might be given the marginal place they have long occupied within the existing literature – but instead seeks to interrogate their wider impact on the volunteers' military service. In so doing, it shows that their interactions with their host country were not incidental at

[12] For separate overviews of the German scholarship into German volunteers, Hungarian scholarship into the Hungarians, French scholarship into the French and Scandinavian scholarship into Scandinavians, see Carlos Collado Seidel, 'Entre la esvástica y las Brigadas Internacionales: Bibliografía reciente sobre la Guerra Civil en alemán'; Iván Harsányi and Anita Zalai, 'Sobre la Guerra Civil Española y sus antecedentes: Una visión desde Hungría'; Morten Heiberg, 'Visiones Nórdicas de la Guerra Civil Española' and Jean-Marc Delaunay, 'Miradas francesas sobre la Guerra Civil', all published in *Studia Histórica, Historia contemporánea*, 32 (2014). To get a sense of just how widespread 'national' histories are, it is useful to consider those dedicated to specific contingents of volunteers. Take, for example, those who spoke English. Amongst the many secondary works devoted to them are Robert Rosenstone's *Crusade of the Left: The Lincoln Battalion in the Spanish Civil War* (New York: Pegasus, 1969); Cecil Eby's *Comrades and Commissars: The Lincoln Battalion in the Spanish Civil War* (University Park: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2007); Michael Petrou's *Renegades: Canadians in the Spanish Civil War* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2008); Fearghal McGarry's *Irish Politics and the Spanish Civil War,* cited previously; James Hopkins's *Into the Heart of the Fire: The British in the Spanish Civil War* (Redwood City, CA: Stanford University Press, 1998); Richard Baxell's *British Volunteers in the Spanish Civil War: The British Battalion in the International Brigades, 1936–1939* (London: Routledge, 2004) and Hywel Francis's *Miners Against Fascism: Wales and the Spanish Civil War* (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1984).

[13] For exceptions which prove the rule, see Angela Jackson, *Beyond the Battlefield: A Cave Hospital in the Spanish Civil War* (London: Warren & Pell, 2005) and Richard Baxell, 'Three Months in Spain: The British Battalion at Madrigueras and Jarama from January to March 1937' in Jim Jump (ed.), *Looking Back at the Spanish Civil War: The International Brigade Memorial Trust's Len Crome Memorial Lectures, 2002–2010* (London: Lawrence & Wishart, 2010), 65–92. Jorge Marco and Maria Thomas have considered the role of language in the International Brigades, including the foreign volunteers' relationship with Spanish. See Marco and Thomas, '"Mucho malo for fascisti': Languages and Transnational Soldiers in the Spanish Civil War, *War & Society*, 38:2 (2019), 139–61.

all, but indelibly linked to their antifascist struggle from the moment they set foot on Spanish soil right up until the moment they left it – and, very often, for decades afterwards, too. They influenced their experiences and emotions, underlined their ideas and identities, informed their motivations and actions, shaped their postwar memories and public interventions, and ultimately underpinned their ability to wage, imagine and justify the war they were so intimately involved in for their own sake and that of their wider publics. They also generated opportunities to shape the antifascist war effort in their own image, even if the results were occasionally more mixed than they may have liked.

In putting forward this case, this book focusses far more on the foreign volunteers' experiences of cross-cultural contact than it does those of their Spanish hosts. This is partly a reflection of the sheer abundance of archival material which the former generated compared to the latter, as well as a deliberate choice to use this material to challenge dominant understandings of this most famous of fighting units. As historians of other twentieth-century conflicts have pointed out, such archival imbalances should by no means lead us to assume that contact between natives and foreigners, soldiers and civilians, colonial rulers and colonial subjects is a one-way process.[14] Just because the antifascist volunteers often had the final word on their relationship with civil-war Spain is no guarantee that their encounters were experienced the same way by Spaniards, nor that they walked away from them in agreement over what they had meant. Indeed, when Spanish testimony appears in the following pages – whether it's from the memoirs of well-known politicians or interviews with ordinary villagers – it tends to reveal a wider range of reactions than the volunteers often allowed for. Keeping the receiving end of transnational soldiering in mind enables us to recognise that those who have a particular influence on collective memory do not always have a monopoly on historical experience or, indeed, truth.[15]

Given that they were operating in a foreign and frequently unfamiliar country, it would not be unreasonable to regard practically every moment the antifascist volunteers spent in Spain as amounting to some form of cross-cultural contact. Even those who were uninterested in initiating conversation with their hosts – or were simply incapable of doing so as they sat for days on end in a trench – could not help but take note of their physical surroundings and draw important conclusions about the country

[14] Maguire, *Contact Zones of the First World War,* 4.
[15] Nir Arielli and Davide Rodogno's call for historians to pay more attention to the 'receiving end' of transnational military service is yet to go properly answered in the case of Spain. See 'Transnational Encounters', *Journal of Modern European History*, 14:3 (2016), 315–20.

in which they found themselves, the people who inhabited it and the war they were fighting. The same has been true for foreign fighters operating in other circumstances, including the approximately 78,000 Italians who enrolled for the *Corpo Truppe Volontarie* (Corps of Volunteer Troops) fighting for General Franco. Many of the several thousand photographs which Lieutenant Guglielmo Sandri took in the course of the Spanish Civil War and which were put on display for the first time in the Catalan city of Tarragona in 2008 document the quotidian flip-side to Mussolini's grand rhetoric of helping to build a fascist empire in Spain. Instead of heroic battle scenes showing fallen warriors, we are shown sweeping landscapes, city buildings and soldiers at leisure – sights which might have seemed eerily familiar to the antifascist volunteers on the other side of the front lines. In one of Sandri's photographs, children are shown playing and giving the fascist salute. For the antifascist fighters, the setting would have been the Republican rearguard, and the salute the clenched fist of the loyalist cause.[16]

None of this is to suggest that the relationship between foreign fighters and their host countries is always quite so passive. Amongst other forms of contact, this book considers rearguard conversations, attempts to procure goods, engagement in frontline violence, the taking of prisoners, visits from political delegations, the planning of rallies, the celebration of parties, journeys to new bases, visits to children's homes, pledges to government ministers, the holding of public meetings and the pursuit of friendship, romance and sex. The volunteers dug into the Spanish earth for cover, directed their artillery towards Spanish towns from afar and witnessed the dead bodies of Spanish soldiers up close. They shared meals with Spaniards, fought on the front lines with Spaniards and, on occasion, fell in love with Spaniards, too. Although the speeches of rebel leaders and the pages of the Francoist press represented the International Brigades as an invading army hell-bent on subjugating Catholic Spain to communist terror, the relationship between the civilians of the loyalist rearguard and the antifascist volunteers was, in the main, a peaceful one. As far as the latter were concerned, the only real occupiers were the 'fascist' forces on the other side of the trenches, with the result that – once again, in the main – they sought to conduct themselves appropriately, even if they occasionally fell short of their own antifascist standards in practice.

[16] For more on these photographs, see Miguel Mora, 'España, vista por un fascista italiano', *El País*, 6 November 2008, https://elpais.com/diario/2008/11/06/cultura/1225926001_850215.html, accessed 1 August 2024.

For all their diversity, there were important limits on the volunteers' encounters with Spain. Given that they were soldiers constrained by military necessities rather than sightseers free to follow their interests, this should not come as a surprise. Most obviously, they had to go where they were told, their destinations determined not by personal preference but by unpredictable twists and turns in the war effort. Not a few volunteers admitted that they had never heard of the places in which they trained or fought until they were sent there, although they would become indelibly etched into their memories from that point onwards. 'Caspe, Tortosa', began a poem written by Fred Blaire about his brother Bill, an American volunteer lost in action in 1938, citing the names of two locations where the Abraham Lincoln Battalion fought. 'Those distant villages became as near to us as our own towns', he wrote, adding that 'we grew to know their names as well as names of towns and cities we lived in many years'.[17] Valleys previously unknown to most foreigners, like the Jarama, and mountain ranges of little interest to outsiders, like the Sierra Pàndols, soon secured their place in the international antifascist consciousness and are, today, engraved onto memorials and monuments the world over. It is certainly not unlikely that the Castilian village of Madrigueras, where many of Bill Blaire's comrades trained, is better known to historians of the International Brigades than it is to Spaniards living more than fifty miles away.

The nature of the military unit at hand can also shape the possibilities for, and outcomes of, the cross-cultural contact its members engage in. It is not necessary to look too far beyond the International Brigades to recognise this, with encounters between Spaniards and the tens of thousands of Moroccans fighting for Franco closely regulated by commanders keen to maintain physical, social and religious distance between the two groups. The Moroccans – who, like Franco's Italian soldiers, were organised into dedicated units – were provided with their own hospitals, cemeteries, imams and prostitutes, the latter of whom were flown across the Straits of Gibraltar especially for the purpose.[18] In contrast, the German pilots of the Condor Legion were a conspicuous presence in some of Seville's finest bars and hotels, where they often mixed freely with local notables and wealthy aristocrats.[19] Individual foreigners within Franco's Foreign Legion also came into close contact

[17] Fred Blair, 'Our Brother Bill', Marx Memorial Library (hereafter MML), SC.EPH.9.3.
[18] Ali Al Tuma, 'Victims, Wives, and Concubines: The Spanish Civil War and Relations between Moroccan Troops and Spanish Women', in Götz Nordbruch and Umar Ryad (eds.), *Transnational Islam in Interwar Europe* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), 211–32.
[19] Schüler-Springorum, 'War as Adventure', 208–33.

with Spaniards – in this case, those bearing arms.[20] So too did many of the antifascists who joined the workers' militias early on in the war. Unlike the volunteers of the International Brigades, these often had little help in getting to Spain and had to rely on their own wits to gain entry into a military unit.[21] George Orwell, for one, enjoyed his close proximity to the Spaniards fighting within his dissident communist militia, believing he would have forfeited this had he crossed over to the International Brigades.[22]

Whilst the extent to which each of the 35,000 antifascist volunteers engaged in cross-cultural contact depended on their military responsibilities, their proximity to civilians and their willingness to make contact, their superiors took steps to ensure that relations were, at the very least, cordial enough to enable them to operate comfortably wherever they were based. If this has been a basic objective of their counterparts in a whole range of conflicts, the leaders of the International Brigades went further still in encouraging the volunteers to generate new popular energies for their antifascist crusade. Hearts and minds were not only to be won but fundamentally transformed through the foreign fighters' direct example. For all that historians continue to debate the extent to which the violence in Spain fits within modern-day understandings of 'total war', the antifascist volunteers were under no doubts that theirs was a zero-sum struggle of ideologies which called for the active backing of rearguard civilians as well as the frontline contributions of soldiers.[23] Their leaders therefore saw to it that they helped to bring in the harvest, provided medical attention for locals and set up canteens for hungry children. These initiatives have no parallel in the history of foreign fighters in Franco's ranks. In fact, many of the Germans who belonged to the Condor Legion were distinctly unimpressed by the rebel war effort's lack of political imagination, particularly given the mass-mobilising nature of the Nazi movement back home.[24]

Far more consistent than these face-to-face forms of contact, if a great deal less direct, were those which the International Brigade leadership

[20] Keene, *Fighting for Franco*, 2.
[21] Kenyon Zimmer, 'The Other Volunteers: American Anarchists and the Spanish Civil War, 1936–1939', *Journal for the Study of Radicalism*, 10:2 (Fall 2016), 26.
[22] George Orwell, Extract from letter to Victor Gollancz, 1 May 1937, in Peter Davison (ed.), *Orwell in Spain* (London: Penguin, 2001), 17.
[23] On the relationship between the concept of total war and the Spanish Civil War, see Roger Chickering, 'The Spanish Civil War in the Age of Total War' in Martin Baumeister and Stefanie Schüler-Springorum (eds.), *'If You Tolerate This . . . ': The Spanish Civil War in the Age of Total War* (Frankfurt: Campus Verlag, 2008), 28–43.
[24] Stephanie Schüler-Springorum, 'War as Adventure: The Experience of the Condor Legion in Spain', in Baumeister and Schüler-Springorum (eds.), *If You Tolerate This*, 197–8.