

Seeing Red: The Mackenzie-Papineau Battalion in Canadian History and Memory

By

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Abstract

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The Mackenzie-Papineau Battalion are a group that has been historically overlooked. Since they first volunteered to fight in the Spanish Civil War there has been a stigma associated with this group, a taint of communism that made them 'suspect'. This negative association led to increased attention from the RCMP and ultimately the denial of veteran status from the federal government. This study explores the way in which these volunteers have been viewed since their enlistment and return to Canada and how these views have shaped the memory, or lack thereof, of the Mackenzie-Papineau Battalion.

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Introduction

“Over the decades there was to be no officially sanctioned silent moments for these heroes ... Seventy-five years have passed, yet they still get no respect ... the government ignores their legacy.”¹

The Mackenzie-Papineau Battalion (“Mac-Paps”) are among the lesser known Canadian veterans of the twentieth century. The Mac-Paps were one battalion of the International Brigades, a group of volunteers convoked by the Comintern to fight for the Spanish Republic during the Spanish Civil War. This conflict began in July 1936 and lasted until 1939, and was by no mean isolated to Spain.² General Francisco Franco and his Nationalist supporters overthrew the Spanish government in a coup d’état on the eve of July 17, 1936.³ The Republican forces, assisted by the International Brigades, supported the elected Republican government.

The Spanish Civil War has its roots in the deposition of the monarchy in 1931 and the abdication of King Alfonso XIII. This date marks the beginning of the Republican government in Spain, which would govern until Franco’s coup d’état in 1936. Francisco Franco was a general in the Spanish army and took advantage of this position as well as widespread dissatisfaction over Spain’s poor economy,

¹ Peter Worthington, “Distorting Spanish Civil War History,” *Toronto Sun*, June 2, 2012. Accessed: April 30, 2019. <https://torontosun.com/2012/06/02/distorting-spanish-civil-war-history/wcm/b15e5d22-7c84-4402-a5c3-6ac39b1d3ba6>

² Michael Petrou, *Renegades: Canadians in the Spanish Civil War 1936-1939* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2008), xiii.

³ For the purposes of this thesis, the term nationalists and rebels will be used synonymously and interchangeably to describe those who supported Franco and his cause. “Republicans” will be used to refer to those who remained loyal to the democratically elected government and its supporters. Veterans are those who participated and volunteered for the International Brigades, regardless of whether they are officially recognized by the government or not.

growing separatist movements, unstable leadership and secular reforms. The conflict in Spain soon gained the attention of the rest of Europe.

The Spanish Civil War was a concern for the other powers in Europe. They feared that the fighting in Spain could spread to the rest of Europe and plunge it into another war; something that most countries were not prepared to deal with. With the First World War and the Great Depression barely in the past — and their ramifications still a reality — most European countries did not have the economic strength, infrastructure or the manpower to participate in another major conflict. For this reason, many countries adopted an isolationist view, with the exception of Germany and Italy (which backed Franco's Nationalists) and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) which supported the Republicans. Apart from these interventionists, the isolationist mentality that dominated in Western Europe and North America led to the creation of the Non-Intervention Committee, a joint venture between the French and British governments, and the Non-Intervention Agreement, signed by twenty-seven countries. This idea of non-intervention spread across the Atlantic to Canada, which in July 1937 (under the Liberal government of William Lyon Mackenzie-King) enacted the Foreign Enlistment Act: legislation that forbade the recruitment and enrolment of Canadian citizens in foreign conflicts in which the Canadian government did not formally engage.

Despite the Foreign Enlistment Act, 1500 Canadian volunteers joined the International Brigades to fight for the Spanish Republican government, the second

largest contingent per capita after France.⁴ The Canadian battalion was named after Mackenzie and Papineau because they were historic Canadian figures, that represented both English and French Canada, and had leaders in the 1837 rebellions. William Lyon Mackenzie led the Upper Canada Rebellion, while Louis Joseph Papineau headed the rebellion in Lower Canada. The Mackenzie-Papineau Battalion was involved in battles at Jarama, Brunete, Quinto, Belchite, Fuentes de Ebro, Teruel, and the Ebro.⁵

Despite the support of the International Brigades, Franco's Nationalist forces claimed victory in April 1939, and Spain became a fascist dictatorship under Franco. The surviving volunteers of the International Brigades who had come from across the globe, were forced to return to their countries in defeat and, because of Russia's role in the creation of the International Brigades, those who volunteered became viewed as communists and as agents of the Soviet Union. This was the case in Canada, where the Royal Canadian Mounted Police surveilled the volunteers after their return, believing them to be a threat to Canada.

With the stigma that surrounded communism now attached to the veterans, and the surveillance and restrictions that went along with it, they were denied the

⁴ While both Canadian men and women volunteered in the Spanish Civil War, this paper does not focus on women's involvement as there is a notable lack of information on their numbers or their role in the conflict. It is for this reason that the term "volunteer" was selected, so as to not infer that no women were present. This is a potential avenue for further research to better understand Canadian women's participation in the Spanish Civil War.

⁵ Victor Howard and Mac Reynolds, *The Mackenzie-Papineau Battalion: The Canadian Contingent in the Spanish Civil War* (Ottawa: Carleton University Press, 1986), 1.

heroic veteran status that was bestowed on the soldiers of the other major conflicts of the mid-twentieth century, in particular the Second World War, and they faded into obscurity for fifty years. In the 1980s, however, a group of veterans began a campaign for recognition from the Canadian federal government. Over the course of the volunteers' campaign, they received backing from left-wing political parties and the general public, but were unable to garner enough support from the federal government to win official veteran status or government recognition. This, however, did not preclude the veterans from being recognized for their actions, local initiatives at recognition and commemoration began in the 1980s and continue to this day.

Historiography

The historiography of the International Brigades tends to focus on the soldiers' experiences during the war with an emphasis on major battles, as well as their participation in units such as the Mackenzie-Papineau Battalion, the Abraham Lincoln Brigade, and other divisions. Scholars in this field of study in Canada include Michael Petrou, Victor Hoar, and William Beeching who have looked at factors that influenced volunteers' participation in the Spanish Civil War by examining the impact of labour camps, general feelings of discontent, and the influence of a steady paycheque on the recruitment process. The Canadian historiography centres heavily on justifying the volunteers' decision to fight in Spain and their ideological motivation, and generally mirrors broader scholarship on the

International Brigades, which is characterized by noticeable shifts in approach and methodology.

Scholarship on the International Brigades appears to fall into one of three categories: Socialist histories tend to focus on the communist elements of the International Brigades and highlight their actions as a part of a broader revolutionary movement; Social histories shifted the focus away from communism as the structure responsible for creating the International Brigades and instead argued that the volunteers must be treated as individuals, each with their own motivations for joining this foreign war, rather than seeing them as a cohesive and ideologically inspired unit. A focus on the social profile of the volunteers prior to their enlistment attempted to identify trends that could help to explain their participation. Finally, the last major interpretation that appears in the historiography sought to explore the larger implications of the Spanish Civil War on an international scale with an emphasis placed on the Cold War and its ramifications. These studies examine the impact this conflict had on international politics and emphasize the political dimension of the conflict and its legacy.

Socialist Histories

The socialist history of the International Brigades first appears in scholarship as early as 1939 and continued until the end of the Cold War. The main aim of this literature is to paint the Brigades in a positive light, often stressing the fact that these volunteers were the 'first anti-fascists' and were on the 'right side' of the conflict. In this way, we can see this approach as apologist in nature, as they are

trying to defend the actions of the International Brigades, who received much criticism for their participation and suffered for their involvement following their return home. Within this socialist history is an element of military history, emphasizing how important the volunteers' role was, and retelling the events of the war. These studies use descriptions of the battles and the enemy to demonstrate the volunteers' heroism and to show that their cause was just.

Some of the first works on the International Brigades were written by veteran volunteers. For example, *Britons in Spain* was written by William Rust in 1939.⁶ Rust was a communist functionary and his book recounts the exploits of the fifteenth International Brigade. His narrative emphasizes a sense of revolutionary unity, with communism binding the troops together. Another early book is *The Mackenzie-Papineau Battalion: Canadian Participation in the Spanish Civil War*, by Victor Hoar and Mac Reynolds.⁷ In trying to understand the Canadian experience, this book focuses on the conditions and losses the troops suffered during the Spanish Civil War. In directing their study in such a way, Reynolds and Hoar highlight the heroism and idealism of the "Mac-Paps" especially when they were aware of the likelihood of death and defeat. This book was a jumping off point for Canadian literature on the International Brigades, which was built upon further by veteran William Beeching, who retells his experience as a Canadian volunteer.

Although this book was published in 1989, it still adheres to the socialist narrative

⁶ William Rust, *Britons in Spain: The History of the British Battalion of the XVth International Brigade* (London: Lawrence & Wishart, 1939).

⁷ Victor Hoar and Mac Reynolds, *The Mackenzie-Papineau Battalion: Canadian Participation in the Spanish Civil War* (Toronto: Coop Clark Publishing, 1969).

that Rust laid the groundwork for some fifty years earlier. In his work, Beeching also seeks to demonstrate that the veterans were on the 'right side' of the conflict and therefore deserving of recognition.⁸

Amirah Inglis, who writes about the Australian participation in the Spanish Civil War, sees the symbolic significance of the sixty-six volunteers who travelled from Australia to Spain to aid the Republic in the Spanish Civil War.⁹ In her conclusion, Inglis agrees that, in terms of contributions to the war effort, Australia's role was insignificant.¹⁰ However, looking at the matter symbolically, she finds that sixty-six people travelling across the seas to aid in a battle they had no stake or claim in because of their beliefs was highly significant and laudable. Inglis' contributions to scholarship on the International Brigades mirrors Beeching's attempt to put the spotlight on the righteousness of the volunteers and their cause.

Ideological themes are less prominent in American literature on the International Brigades than in Canadian or British scholarship, but American historiography likewise focuses on the experiences of the volunteers. Alvah Bessie and Albert Prago compiled letters, memoirs and diary entries by veterans of the Spanish Civil War into an anthology.¹¹ In the preface to *Our Fight*, Prago notes that

⁸ William Beeching, *Canadian Volunteers: Spain, 1936-1939* (Regina: Canadian Plains Research Center, 1989).

⁹ Amirah Inglis, *Australians in the Spanish Civil War* (London: Allen and Unwin, 1987).

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 213.

¹¹ Alvah Bessie and Albert Prago, eds. *Our Fight: Writings by Veterans of the Abraham Lincoln Brigade, SPAIN 1936-1939* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1987), 12.

“not only has recognition been lamentably absent, but our history (Veterans of the Abraham Lincoln Brigade) has been virtually obliterated.”¹² In the texts written by veterans, there is a sense of urgency in recording their story and preserving it for future generations. There is likewise the recurring theme of being on the morally correct side of the conflict, and the need to demonstrate that what they did was both right and warranted.

Our Fight, Australians in the Spanish Civil War, and Canadian Volunteers were written to coincide with the fiftieth anniversary of the Spanish Civil War, and therefore also have a commemorative function. We can see the issues discussed as a way to remind the readers that these volunteers fought for something worthwhile and are worthy of recognition and remembrance. Their messages all deal with attempting to convince the reader of the honour of fighting in this war. As Prago and Alvah write, there was a hope that: “in the not too distant future the veterans ... will be honoured by our fellow citizens, by the people’s institutions and perhaps even by our government.”¹³

Social Histories

With the decline of socialist history in the 1980s, social history gained purchase among historians. Social history was a decisive move away from “big-man” or “top-down” history, which focused on governments, ideologies, and singular, important people and their impact on history. Instead, social history

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Ibid.

sought to examine the past from the perspective of the everyday person and looked at grassroots movements as a way to understand history from the bottom-up. Historians have found it productive to look at the International Brigades in this way. It provided a layer of depth that was not present in the narrative of the volunteers prior to this point. This seems to be the type of literature with the greatest breadth. Focussing on the lives and identities of the volunteers is a fruitful approach to examining the International Brigades. This approach promised new information on the Brigades, as it no longer looked at grand narratives of revolutionary struggle, but rather at the volunteers as individuals. This offered new avenues for research through interviews and oral history, which gives texture to the history as the volunteers came from a range of backgrounds and had various motivations. It also strips the stories of the ideological agendas present in the earlier socialist histories. This change in historical approach happened at a key moment as the number of veterans living was dwindling and there was a limited amount of time to record their experiences.

The work of Peter Carroll in the *Odyssey of the Abraham Lincoln Brigade*, is an example of social history providing new and important information to a previous topic of study. We can see his study of the Abraham Lincoln Brigade as a bridge between socialist and social history as he frames the American volunteers' presence in Spain as being just another battle in a larger fight against fascism. This type of framing is not dissimilar from a socialist perspective which always claimed to be anti-fascist; however, he goes about this by looking at their military service without

romanticizing or glorifying the struggle, but also looks at their social and cultural backgrounds.

Arguably the most complete account of Canadian participation in the Spanish Civil War, Michael Petrou's *Renegades: Canadians in the Spanish Civil War* follows a similar approach to understand "what happened to [the volunteers] during the course of the war and in the years that followed."¹⁴ He differentiates his work by blending social and military history. While the others are focused specifically on the lives of the volunteers prior to the Spanish Civil War, Petrou does briefly examine this period prior to the conflict, but also looks beyond this scope and examines the volunteers' experiences during and after the war as well. The volunteers he examines are described as 'internationals' rather than 'Canadians' who had few alternatives in 1936 and made up the motley crew that would become the Mackenzie-Papineau Battalion. Bronte Gould's "Australian Participation in the Spanish Civil War" takes a very similar approach to Michael Petrou's work and seeks to explore the different factors that influenced foreign participation in the Spanish Civil War.¹⁵ Similarly, Richard Baxwell does a quantitative analysis of the British volunteers in order to fill out the profile of the volunteers and understand their individual backgrounds.¹⁶ Where both studies struggle is in integrating the wider

¹⁴ Michael Petrou, *Renegades: Canadians in the Spanish Civil War* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2008), 3.

¹⁵ Bronte Gould, "Australian Participation in the Spanish Civil War," *Flinders Journal of History and Politics* 28 (2012): 98-117.

¹⁶ Richard Baxwell, *British Volunteers in the Spanish Civil War: The British Battalion in the International Brigades, 1936-1939* (London: Routledge, 2004).

political significance of the International Brigades as intrinsically tied to communism and more specifically the Comintern.

Political Histories

The most recent category of literature on the International Brigades is political history. This history, in contrast to the previous two approaches, does not focus on the volunteers or the veterans. Instead, it takes a wider perspective and seeks to understand the tensions between nations, and how they influenced perceptions of the conflict and of those who fought in it. As we have seen in the previous two categories of historiography, each new type adds to our knowledge of the International Brigades. In terms of contributing to the scholarship; where social history takes a micro study approach, political history takes a broader perspective. The political history of the Spanish Civil War looks at the broader implications and ramifications of the conflict on an international stage.

Jill Edwards, for example, describes how England and the United States dealt with Franco's Spain, in the face of what the Soviet Union was doing.¹⁷ Her book focuses on the post-war period and the underlying question of how much the US and UK should accept Franco, as they were working side by side in NATO and the United Nations. "The Spanish problem remained impossible to resolve in the post-war world in which the Soviet Union, a recent ally, had become foe."¹⁸ Another study

¹⁷ Jill Edwards, *Anglo-American Relations and the Franco Question, 1945-1955* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1999)

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, xiv.

which focuses on politics in Britain, but looks inward instead of internationally, is the work of Tom Buchannan.¹⁹ He also looks at the period closely following the end of the Spanish Civil War and examines how the actions of the British volunteers reflected back on the British left, demonstrating that the Spanish Civil War had wide and far-reaching effects. Patricia Rae focuses on the Canadian context by building on the work of Michael Petrou and comparing it to the socialist history that aligned itself with communist ideologies. She finds that in the face of interpretations aligned with either the Left or the Right, the volunteers get lost. Through her political history of the volunteers, she finds that this is not the best way to look at them and argues for the use of social history, as the best method to look at the volunteers' experience.²⁰ Seeing volunteers as either red or white was prevalent in the Cold War: Paul Corthorn demonstrates this by examining the different interpretations of the Spanish Civil War which occurred with the advent of the Cold War. His article examines policies in Britain to show that they can be reflective of the shifts in perception at the government level, and the impact of these shifts on the veterans.²¹

Memory and Agency

¹⁹ Tom Buchannan, *Impact of the Spanish Civil War: War, Loss, Memory* (Brighton: Sussex Academy Press, 2007)

²⁰ Patricia Rae, "Between the White and Red: Remembering Canadians in the Spanish Civil War," *Queen's Quarterly* 115:3 (Fall 2008): 338-402.

²¹ Paul Corthorn, "Cold War Politics in Britain and the Contested Legacy of the Spanish Civil War," *European History Quarterly* 44:4 (2014): 678-702.

There is a noticeable gap in the historiography, however, concerning the role of the veterans and their agency in shaping the memory of the Spanish Civil War and of their own participation in that conflict. Although memory studies is a burgeoning field, the role of Canadian veterans of the Spanish Civil War in shaping the memory and commemoration of their contributions -- and the factors that ultimately limited this recognition -- remain to be studied. It is this gap that I hope to begin to fill by focusing on the factors which have shaped the memory of the volunteers since their return in 1939. Three scholars who have come closest to what this present study is trying to accomplish are: Peter Glazer, Teresa Huehle and Matthew Poggi. Teresa Huehle uses a monument erected in San Francisco, and the debates surrounding it, to demonstrate how the committee involved sought to navigate between being faithful to the veterans' memory and conforming to a larger national narrative.²² Peter Glazer also looks at American forms of commemoration of the Abraham Lincoln Brigade (ALB). His book focuses on how nostalgia was "deployed ...as a necessary corrective to an official culture disinterested in America's leftist past, and threatened by its implications."²³ He sees the veterans of the ALB's attempts to push back against official narratives as a way to reclaim their suppressed history and create their own *lieux de mémoire*. Matthew Poggi's study focuses on the lobbying efforts of the veterans to gain official recognition from the Canadian government in

²² Teresa Huehle, "I see the flag in all of that' — Discussions on Americanism and Internationalism in the Making of the San Francisco to the Abraham Lincoln Brigade," *American Communist History* 10:1 (2011): 1-33.

²³ Peter Glazer, *Radical Nostalgia: Spanish Civil War Commemoration in America* (Rochester, NY: University of Rochester Press, 2010), book jacket.

the form of veteran status.²⁴ In his study, Poggi examines the veterans' agency in negotiating a formalized place in Canadian history. This present study will examine how the current memory of the International Brigades has been shaped in Canada, which will help to further the historiography of the memory of the Mackenzie-Papineau Battalion.

This thesis was written using a range of primary and secondary source material. Primary sources used include a variety of newspapers from various locations across Canada in an attempt to provide a wide scope of views. The Spanish Civil War was an event that garnered attention across the country and so too did the return of the volunteers. By looking at the articles written about the veterans' return and the welcome events that were planned for them, a general perspective of the public's opinion about the war and its Canadian veterans will be explored. One of the issues with looking at newspapers is that they often reflect a distinct political point of view; this can however be mitigated by examining multiple newspapers to establish a wider consensus. In addition to the articles, a large portion of the material used in this thesis comes from the Spanish Civil War Collection at the University of Toronto. These are documents, memos, notes, messages and newspaper clippings have been collected over time, largely by the Friends of the Mackenzie-Papineau Battalion. Memoirs of veterans are also used in this study: they show how some veterans felt about their experiences as well as

²⁴ Matthew Poggi, "Saving Memories: Canadian Veterans in the Spanish Civil War and Their Pursuit of Government Recognition," *American Communist History* 12:3 (2013): 193-212.

their position within society upon their return. The final source that is examined are the monuments erected through donations in honour of the volunteers. The process and debates surrounding their creation, the monuments themselves, as well as their locations and inscriptions are important sources.

Much work still remains to be done on the volunteers who fought for the Republican cause in the Spanish Civil War. While the legacy of the war itself has received considerable attention following the death of Spanish dictator Francisco Franco, the post-war experiences of those who fought with the Republicans is equally deserving of scholarly examination. Volunteers from France, Italy, Germany, Poland, the Soviet Union, the United States, the United Kingdom, Belgium, Czechoslovakia, Romania, Yugoslavia, Hungary, Albania, Canada, Sweden, Switzerland, Bulgaria, Ireland and Australia all joined the International Brigades. Among these nations, the Anglophone countries of Britain, Australia, the United States and Canada raise particular questions and highlight politically inspired shifts in recognition and commemoration of the International Brigades. This thesis attempts to continue work in the vein of memory studies and fill in this gap in the historiography of the Canadian volunteers of the Spanish Civil War. It will demonstrate how the veterans of this war have tried to actively participate in the framing of their history and exercise agency in how they would be remembered. It will also showcase the obstacles the volunteers faced in their plight for recognition. A conflict over recognition and commemoration took place between the federal government and the volunteers in the 1980s and 90s. The veterans' demands were met with reluctance by those in power, and official recognition was ultimately

denied. This thesis will examine the efforts of the Canadian veterans of the International Brigades and the relationship between their demands for recognition and the contours of memory of the Spanish Civil War. It will demonstrate how a combination of lobbying by the veterans and a shifting political atmosphere allowed veterans to give voice to their own history, despite official reluctance. Finally, this study will demonstrate how memory and politics have shaped the way Canadians remember the Mackenzie-Papineau Battalion and the International Brigades.

Chapter One examines the Foreign Enlistment Act, which was passed in 1937, seven months after the start of the conflict in Spain, and after 500 Canadian volunteers had already departed and were fighting for the Republic. By looking at the circumstances surrounding the legislation's enactment, this chapter argues that the Foreign Enlistment Act was both politically and socially motivated to appease various groups, while at the same time appearing to take a decisive stance on the issue of the Spanish Civil War. It was an effort by the government to appease the French-English divide in Canada, while at the same time keeping with the Non-Intervention Agreement that Canada's allies had signed and agreed to abide by.

Chapter Two surveys the different opinions that existed regarding the Mackenzie-Papineau Battalion both during the conflict in Spain and immediately upon their return. This divergence occurred between official opinion, namely the RCMP and the federal government, and public opinion, as displayed in newspapers. While the RCMP saw the volunteers as a communist threat and influenced the government according to this perception based on their surveillance efforts, the

public had a more sympathetic outlook based on the descriptions of the conflict that was published in the newspapers, resulting in dramatically different interpretations of the volunteers and their service.

Chapter Three outlines the struggle that the volunteers have faced since 1980 in gaining official recognition from the government. This fight for recognition took place both in the House of Commons and before the Standing Committee on Veterans Affairs. This chapter argues that the volunteers' fight for recognition from the government and the government's denial of this recognition, centred on the Foreign Enlistment Act and its implications for the actions of the volunteers, which ultimately barred them from being considered 'official' veterans and denied them any compensation associated with this status.

Together, these chapters weave together an understanding of the Mackenzie-Papineau Battalion's place in Canadian history and memory. The period immediately following the volunteers' return demonstrates that although the government may have viewed the volunteers as a communist threat largely due to RCMP reports, the public did not follow the same line of thinking. The examination of debate transcripts from the government during the veterans' quest for recognition shows the rationale behind the government's refusal, thus bringing the narrative full-circle. The volunteers' original struggle began with the Foreign Enlistment Act and this same act was the reason that the volunteers have ultimately not been formally considered as veterans.

Chapter One: An Act After the Fact

The Popular Front

During Spain's elections after the deposition of the monarchy in 1931, the Popular Front was the official party elected by the people to represent them in the government. The Popular Front, although a political party in Spain, was also a part of a larger international movement spurred by the changing tactics of the Communist International (Comintern). This movement marked a shift away from the rigidity of earlier Comintern policy. With the Popular Front, the Comintern sought to expand support for communism and socialism by broadening the scope of "the left" to include "not only Communists and Socialists but all progressive forces willing to join in the struggle against fascism."¹ The rise of fascism was the catalyst for this departure from earlier Soviet doctrine, which saw more moderate socialists as competitors rather than allies. Divisions on the left had abetted the rise of the

¹ James R. Barrett, "Rethinking the Popular Front," *Rethinking Marxism* 21: 4 (Oct 2009), 532.

extreme right, but in 1936, Stalin reversed this policy and focused attention on Fascism. With socialist and communist parties no longer fighting amongst each other, their membership saw significant increases and they were better able to focus efforts on their political enemy, fascism. These orders for cooperation came directly from Moscow and then filtered down through the individual communist parties in their respective regions. With this new approach, communists sought to ally themselves with a broader spectrum of parties and organizations on the left and gain supporters through a tentative alliance. Communists joined forces with “mainline labor organizations and ... with the Socialist party, other radicals and even bourgeois political activists in organizing resistance to fascism,” which enabled them to build a bigger and more effective antifascist movement.²

This phenomenon occurred on a global scale with directives from Moscow reaching places like France, Canada, the United States, and Spain, where the communists sought to increase their hold in the face of the new threat of Fascism. While some scholars like Theodore Draper, see the Popular Front as part of the larger communist movement, others like Michael Denning, see it as a part of a social movement which saw its beginnings with the unrest that the Great Depression ushered in.³ No matter which theory you subscribe to, the Popular Front was a radical departure from previous political tactics. This alliance presented a set of

² Ibid.

³ Michael Denning, “Afterword: Reconsidering the Significance of the Popular Front,” *Rethinking Marxism* 21: 4 (Oct 2009), 553.

challenges that would contribute to the fall of the Second Spanish Republic and to the revolt of General Francisco Franco and the Nationalist forces.

In Spain, the Popular Front came to encompass a mix of associations representing a range of ideologies including Anarchists, Liberals and Socialists, along with Basque and Catalan Separatists, with President Manuel Azana at the helm of this coalition. Similar parties were seen springing up around Europe during this period: Popular Front coalitions won elections in France and brought communists out in favour of democracy in the United States. Stalin's strategy was successful as it created tangible results in increased numbers globally. This unification on the left was however, a marriage of convenience. This antifascist alliance would struggle against Nationalists, Traditionalists and Conservatives as well as Fascists worldwide. In Spain, the Popular Front's opposition was from landed elites, the military and the clergy who sought to preserve the power and privilege they had enjoyed under the monarchy. This group that would come to form the core of the Nationalists, opposed what they perceived as the fragmentation of Spain by the elected government.

Ideological Clash

Although the conflict that would erupt in Spain was a civil war; the international community understood it from the beginning to be a conflict between Fascism and Communism for the future of Europe and maybe the world. One of the peculiarities about the Spanish Civil War is the degree of international intervention on both sides. On the side of the Republicans were the International Brigades, under

the auspices of the Comintern and therefore the USSR. The Nationalists were backed by Nazi Germany and Fascist Italy. This clearly set the conflict up to be a showdown between the two competing ideologies in Europe, with the potential to spread outside of the confines of Spain.⁴

The Nationalist forces counted the majority of Spain's military, plus additional personnel and weaponry from German and Italy. Approximately 150,000 troops, 10,000 technicians and \$505 million in war materials were sent to Spain by Franco's fascist supporters.⁵ The additional assistance that was provided to the Nationalists gave them a significant advantage, which would prove critical to Franco's ultimate success. This loan of personnel and materials in addition to supporting Franco's cause, allowed Hitler and Mussolini to field test their new artillery and equipment while at the same time training their troops in real conflict situations; allowing them ample time to prepare and perfect techniques that they would utilize in the Second World War.

This assistance for the Nationalists left the Republicans begging for help from other nations. The help they ultimately received came from a motley group of international volunteers from France, Poland, the Soviet Union, the United States, United Kingdom, Czechoslovakia, Romania, Yugoslavia, Hungary, Albania, Canada, Sweden, Switzerland, Bulgaria, Ireland, Australia and others — all gathered under the banner of the International Brigades. The International Brigade volunteers

⁴ See Appendix 1.

⁵ Norman J. Padelford, "The International Non-Intervention Agreement and the Spanish Civil War," *The American Journal of International Law* 31, 4 (Oct. 1937), 580.

came from a multitude of backgrounds and political leanings, with different factors motivating them to travel to Spain and fight. What they did have in common was their willingness to assist the democratically elected Spanish Republic, although it was the Soviet Comintern which was responsible for the formation of the Brigades, bringing 40,000 fighters to the Republican cause, along with 2,000 technicians and approximately \$100 million in weapons.⁶

The International Brigades were, as we have seen, a direct result of the change in strategy by the USSR and a way to confront the growth of fascism. But why was it only volunteers coordinated by the USSR that came to the Spanish Republic's aid? Other countries also saw this conflict in Spain as a potential precursor to a broader and more serious conflict but were, nonetheless, not prepared to intervene.

For Western governments in the 1930s, communism appeared to be a bigger threat than fascism. Prime Minister Mackenzie King, for example, made numerous visits to Berlin to attempt to improve diplomatic relations with Germany and often spoke well of Hitler, once proclaiming Hitler to be "extremely wise", a "mystic" and a "deliverer of his people from tyranny."⁷ The Red Scare occurred internationally in the 1920s, including in Canada following the Winnipeg General Strike and the rise in

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Tristan Hopper, "The prime minister with a man crush for Hitler: The day Mackenzie King met the Fuhrer," *National Post*, 15 May 2017, Accessed: April 12, 2019. See Appendix 2.

<https://postmedia.us.janrainso.com/static/server.html?origin=https%3A%2F%2Fnationalpost.com%2Fnews%2Fcanada%2Fhe-loves-flowers-the-insane-true-story-of-the-day-canadas-prime-minister-met-hitler>

popularity of communist parties. It occurred during a time that leftist parties, be they Labour, Socialist or Communist, saw an increase in popularity in Canada; for example, in 1936 Winnipeg had a Socialist mayor, a Communist alderman, while another Communist sat in the provincial government.⁸ This increase was a concern because the Bolsheviks in 1917 had conducted a successful revolution and the fear was that a similar occurrence would happen on Canadian soil if left unchecked. In Canada, the Winnipeg General Strike is considered the climax of this fear of revolution and a Royal Commission was set up to determine the cause of this apparent uprising, though in his findings, Hugh Robson concluded that it was an underlying “state of discontent” among workers that allowed leadership to exploit these sentiments and mobilize workers into mass action.⁹ “The strike was a strike, and a protest against unemployment, the cost of living, war profiteering, and inequality; it was not a revolution.”¹⁰ Nevertheless, the Canadian government and the RCMP were alarmed.

Despite the Red Scare being officially deemed “just a strike,” the RCMP still took steps to fight communism, including prosecuting members of the Communist Party of Canada in 1931 using section 98 of the Criminal Code. This section, enacted

⁸ Mary Biggar Peck, *Red Moon Over Spain: Canadian Media Reaction to the Spanish Civil War 1936-1939* (Ottawa: Steel Rail Publishing, 1988), 31.

⁹ *Royal Commission to Enquire into and Report Upon the Causes and Effects of the General Strike Which Recently Existed in the City of Winnipeg for a Period of Six Weeks* (Winnipeg: Government of Manitoba, 1919), 5.

¹⁰ Daniel Francis, *Seeing Reds: The Red Scare of 1918-1919, Canada's First War on Terror* (Vancouver: Arsenal Pulp Press, 2010), 223.

after the Winnipeg General Strike, was used to ban “unlawful associations” and targeted communist groups in particular.

The most important issue regarding the section 98 trials was not whether or not they were fair, which they clearly weren't, or whether they constituted violations of civil liberties, which they clearly did. It was the way in which a wartime emergency had become a part of every-day Canadian society.¹¹

The largest and best-known case involving section 98 was a case against Tim Buck and eight other members of the CPC who became known as “the Eight”. They were brought up on charges of membership in an unlawful organization and seditious conspiracy.¹² While section 98 was repealed in 1936, there were still laws in place to aid in targeting communists. One example of this was the Padlock Act in Québec, an act that forbade the use of any property to produce and disseminate Communist or Bolshevik propaganda. This was law “was expressly designed to combat communism in the province.”¹³ This law applied equally to private and public property, giving the police freedom to openly combat the propagation of communism in the province of Québec.¹⁴

In comparing the reactions to communism versus fascism, it becomes clearer that fascism was seen as the lesser of two evils. Fear of the spread of communism was present across Europe and in North America. In the United Kingdom, as

¹¹ Barry Wright, Eric Tucker and Susan Binnie, eds., *Security, Dissent, and the Limits of Toleration in War and Peace, 1914-1939, Canadian State Trials*, vol. IV (Toronto: Toronto University Press, 2015), 352.

¹² Dennis Molinaro, *An Exceptional Law: Section 98 and the Emergency State, 1919-1936* (Toronto: Toronto University Press and the Osgoode Society, 2017), 86.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 226.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

Douglas Little contends, “the Foreign Office was less troubled by a war scare than by a red scare.”¹⁵ The fear of communism informed the attitudes and decisions of other nations in relation to the Spanish conflict. The *Globe and Mail* observed, “The fight has turned into a general war, fought on Spanish territory, over the fundamental issues of fascism versus communism.”¹⁶

Neutrality and Non-Intervention

As the fear of becoming embroiled in another European War became a very real possibility in Spain, nations started to distance themselves by denying the conflict’s potential to enflame the continent. Some emphasized that it was a domestic affair. One observer wrote: “We believe in London this is a civil war, not ideological. Spain is paying for her past sins. The British Government desires the victory of neither one side nor the other. A better Spain will rise, slave neither to Fascism or Communism.”¹⁷ Despite this denial, fear was the driving force behind a Non-Intervention Agreement spearheaded by France, whose concern was a conflict on two fronts: Spain and Germany. France reached out to England in August 1936, to have it attempt to convince the Germans to cease aiding Franco. Their appeal was “for the rapid adoption and rigid observation of an agreed arrangement for non-

¹⁵ Douglas Little, “Red Scare, 1936: Anti-Bolshevism and the Origins of British Non-Intervention in the Spanish Civil War,” *Journal of Contemporary History* 23(1988), 292.

¹⁶ “Thousands Pouring Through France—Thousands Rush to Aid of Loyalists”, *Globe & Mail*, 7 January 1937.

¹⁷ London Letter – “The War in Spain,” *Maclean’s*, 1 March 1937.

intervention in Spain.”¹⁸ After Great Britain answered favourably to this appeal, it was subsequently sent out to other nations, including the USSR, Germany and Italy. In total, twenty-seven nations agreed to sign the Non-Intervention Agreement.¹⁹ Canada, however, did not. Neither did the United States, but they did informally keep to the principles of the agreement. The Soviet Union agreed to “the principle of non-intervention in the internal affairs of Spain and [was] ready to take part in the proposed agreement.”²⁰ However, there were several conditions before they would agree to sign, the more serious being “that assistance rendered by some governments to the rebels against the legal government of Spain should be immediately discontinued.”²¹ This statement clearly demonstrates that the USSR saw Franco’s forces as wrongful insurgents, identifies German and Italian support for Franco, and gave the USSR an exit from the agreement. *The New Frontier* published a political cartoon on this topic in January 1937.²² It depicts a Christmas tree decorated with the accoutrements of war, with gift tags denoting the givers — Germany and Italy.

“The purpose motivating the accord was the desire to prevent Europe from becoming so bound up with and so divided over ideological aspects of the conflict that the fighting would lead to a general European war.”²³ Furthermore, the

¹⁸ William E. Watters, *An International Affair: Non-Intervention in the Spanish Civil War, 1936-1939* (New York: Exposition Press, 1971), 40.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ London Times, 6 August 1936, p. 10.

²¹ Ibid.

²² See Appendix 3.

²³ Ibid., 578.

agreement prohibited the “direct or indirect export or re-export of arms, munitions, materials of war, aircraft and vessels of war.”²⁴ However, the original agreement made no mention of ‘volunteers’, who by 1937, were flooding into Spain by the thousands bound to support both sides. This made it necessary to add an amendment in February 1937, which “would be extended to cover recruitment in, and transit through, or departure from the territory of signatories of persons of non-Spanish nationality proposing to proceed to Spain or Spanish dependencies for the purpose of taking service in the present war.”²⁵ A special supervisory force was put in place to patrol the seas and land around Spain, to attempt to keep materials and volunteers out, but this effort proved ineffective and was easily circumvented by those bound for Spain by passing through the Pyrenees mountain range that separates France and Spain.

The Non-Intervention Agreement that was put in place during the Spanish Civil War had no precedent and was not constructed to be an example used in the face of other conflicts, but was made as a reaction to the particular and peculiar circumstances in Spain.²⁶ The legacy of this agreement is a matter of dispute among historians; some have espoused the opinion that it was a necessary evil, while others like Petrou, take a more cynical view and claim that all this was done “to give the international community a veneer of neutrality.”²⁷ According to this

²⁴ Ann Van Wynen Thomas, A.J. Thomas, Jr. “Non-Intervention and the Spanish Civil War,” *Proceedings of the American Society of International Law at its Annual Meeting (1921-1969)* 61 (April 27-29, 1967), 2.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 3.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 4.

²⁷ Petrou, *Renegades*, xv.

interpretation, we can see the efforts and the agreement as being motivated by self-preservation and self-interest; rather than being in the interest of the common good. Regardless which view we take, the main failing of the Agreement was the lack of enforceability; there were no real consequences for violating the agreement, making it ineffectual.

Canada's Reaction

Given that Spain's government was democratically elected prior to Franco's coup, there was an emotional outpouring in Canada upon hearing and reading of the violence taking place in Spain. Generally speaking, Québec was largely supportive of Franco and the Nationalist side, while much of English-speaking Canada was sympathetic to the Republicans.²⁸ Throughout Canada, the media played a large role in publicizing the conflict in Spain, which meant that although it was happening an ocean away, Canadian audiences were able to see the devastation and impact of the conflict. This fuelled public sympathies and ultimately created the divide that worried Prime Minister Mackenzie King. Canadian citizens were sympathetic, but their allegiances were divided. Just like people were divided in their support, so too was the press. "Fascist tendencies were public and visible in Québec during this period,"²⁹ Québécois were more favourable to pro-Franco press coverage, as he and his supporters appealed to the Conservatives and supporters of the army and

²⁸ Thor Erik Frohn-Nielsen, "Canada's Foreign Enlistment Act: Mackenzie King's Expedient Response to the Spanish Civil War," M.A. thesis, University of Victoria, 1979, iv.

²⁹ Peck, *Red Moon Over Spain*, 30.

church.³⁰ These values were important to French Canadian culture in this period, especially the Catholic Church, which explains their tendency to side with Franco. An article in the *New Frontier* criticized the Aide aux Catholiques d'Espagne that sought "to help General Franco win his Moorish-Italian-German war against Spanish Democracy."³¹ Québécois seem to have seen Franco as the lesser of two evils, "if the Spanish Loyalists win, the victory will be Russia's, while if Franco's armies win the Spanish people will be the victor."³²

Alternatively, cities and papers with ties to Liberal and Labour movements tended towards the Republican cause. An editorial that appeared in the *Free Press*, in late August was unapologetic in its condemnation of the non-intervention agreement:

The Spanish government holds office by lawful authority, the others are like a gang of pirates. Italy and Germany aid a breach of international law, but the democratic nations are too afraid of war to intervene on the side of law, therefore they propose neutrality. Two powers in Europe are getting ready for war, the powers that want peace have no policy.³³

This strongly worded opinion is not uncharacteristic of other editorials in varying newspapers across English-speaking Canada. Another editorial noted the "...flagrant violation of international law and of the non-intervention agreement..."³⁴ *The Toronto Star* attempted to maintain its impartiality but did comment that "if Germany and Italy keep their neutrality pledges, the Loyalists with greater material

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ *New Frontier*, May 1937.

³² *Montreal Gazette*, 2 February 1939.

³³ "Outlook in Europe," editorial, *Winnipeg Free Press*, 28 August 1936.

³⁴ "Events in Spain," editorial, *Winnipeg Free Press*, 9 November 1936.

resources should be able to overcome the advantages given to the rebels by their trained fighting personnel and superior equipment.”³⁵

To support the Republican side meant dealing with the question of Communist intervention, which for many people was a difficult topic: many chose to focus on the integrity of sticking up for important values and ideals, like defending the principles of democracy. “Whatever their economic beliefs, they went gladly into great danger for the sake of what they unquestionably believed to be in the best interests of humanity and justice.”³⁶ Canadian sympathy went beyond mere declarations of support and resulted in approximately 1500 Canadians fighting in Spain.

Canadian Participation

The Soviet Union and the Comintern relied heavily on recruiters to fill the ranks of the International Brigades. In Canada, as in the United States and Great Britain, this role fell to the local Communist parties to find and recruit volunteers to aid the Spanish Republic. Since they were the main recruiting agent for the International Brigades in Canada, it is often assumed that the main factor influencing the volunteers’ enlistment was ideology. If the communists recruited the volunteers, then those who went to Spain must also have been communists, or so the line of thinking goes. This was a stereotype that the recruiters were aware of and actively tried to counteract through their own propaganda. The names of their

³⁵ “The War in Spain,” editorial, *Toronto Star*, 20 August 1936.

³⁶ “The Soldiers’ Return,” editorial, *Saturday Night*, 11 February 1939.

battalions for example were all carefully crafted to counter this narrative. The posters “in support of the International Brigades invoked not communism but patriotism and democracy.”³⁷ Not only did they play on themes of patriotism and democracy, but they were also aware of the power of nationalism and named many of their battalions after national heroes such as George Washington or Abraham Lincoln, for the American troops and William Lyon Mackenzie King and Louis-Joseph Papineau for the Canadians. “A typical banner from a wartime rally read: ‘In Defending Spain – They Defend Canada.’”³⁸

Ideology was not the single motivating factor in most people’s decision to enlist. Research by social historians seeking to explore the backgrounds of the volunteers reveals that the majority who enlisted were working-class. Although this is class from which we typically see Communists or Socialists, it would be a stretch to make this link with all volunteers. One thing that we can discern from these volunteers is that at the very least, they would have needed to be exposed to the same circles that the Communist Party recruiters found the volunteers. In looking at the conditions for workers in the years prior to 1936, opportunities for full-time employment had been spotty at best in most areas. The Great Depression had left many workers without jobs or a source of regular income. “In Montreal a single unemployed man or woman receives the sum of \$1.80 per week to clothe, feed and otherwise keep body and soul together.”³⁹ These were the grave circumstances that

³⁷ Petrou, *Renegades*, 23.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 24.

³⁹ “Not Satisfied,” editorial, *Toronto Star*, 21 January 1939.

thousands across Canada faced. "I was down on my luck. I had nothing. I had ideas in my head. I had idealistic ideas ... Now if someone asked me: Why did you go to Spain? Was it because of ideals, or was it because of money? Truthfully, I couldn't answer. It was a mixture of both. I had nothing. And I had nothing to look forward to."⁴⁰ It was a period where, due to rampant unemployment, many people found themselves moving westward where there were work camps which, although they did not offer much, were a means to earn a meagre wage.

Work camps offered the Communist Party a great opportunity to recruit men seeking to better their circumstances. The Communist Party used affiliated organizations such as the Relief Camp Workers' Union, or the Single Men's Unemployed Association, where people could organize and rally, protest and strike for improvements, to find approximately twenty percent of the Canadian volunteers.⁴¹ The truth was that those who moved in similar circles with the Communist Party were more likely to come in contact with the recruiters, whereas "potential volunteers without knowledge of the party would have moved in different circles and might not have known how or where to enlist."⁴² For these reasons, it was popular to recruit from organization with ties to communism (typically you through involvement in trade unions and the like), while about twenty-five percent were clearly non-communist.⁴³ All of the recruits' information would have been sent to the Comintern to be stored, and over time parts of files and certain pieces of

⁴⁰ Petrou, *Renegades*, 32.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 18.

⁴² *Ibid.*

⁴³ *Ibid.*

information have been misplaced or lost, leaving questions about the exact nature of the volunteers' files unanswerable. Membership in the Communist Party does not seem to have figured into whether or not someone could volunteer, however. One member of the XVth Battalion said, "there was certainly no pressure whatever that I recall ... to join the C.P., on the contrary, I hardly remember the topic being discussed."⁴⁴

The Act

Canada did not sign the Non-Intervention Agreement. It did, however, take steps to prevent its citizens' involvement in the Spanish conflict by passing its own Foreign Enlistment Act, following the same principles of non-intervention as proposed in the Agreement. With the Statute of Westminster; Canada was still technically subject to the British Foreign Enlistment Act of 1870, but the newer and revised act was the Canadian government's reaction to the sympathies of its citizens and the energies of volunteers, and attempt to avoid entanglement in the Spanish Civil War.⁴⁵ This legislation took action to stop Canadians from assisting on either side of the war effort, though it was only the Republican cause that recruited in Canada. One peculiarity about the Act is that it only forbids assistance to states at war with friendly states but makes no prohibitions against aiding rebels. This Act directly prohibited participation in the International Brigades, who fought side by

⁴⁴ John Angus, *With the International Brigades in Spain* (Loughborough: Loughborough University, 1983), 3.

⁴⁵ Prior to the Foreign Enlistment Act, there were approximately 500 volunteers already in Spain. Following Foreign Enlistment Act, between 700 and 1200 Canadians joined the fight against Franco and his Fascist allies.

side with the Republican forces to safeguard the principles of democracy and criminalized service in Spain. The Foreign Enlistment Act, which criminalized participation on the side of the Republic, took its cues from similar British legislation which forbade any British citizen from actively engaging in wars with countries with which Great Britain was not officially at war that was established in 1870. The Canadian government seized these basic principles and began to lobby for similar legislation in January 1937 that would criminalize Canadian citizens' participation in the Spanish conflict.⁴⁶ The act passed on 10 April 1937, declared that:

If any person being a Canadian National, within or without Canada, voluntarily accepts or agrees to accept any commission or engagement in the armed forces of any foreign state at war with any friendly foreign state, or, whether a Canadian National or not, within Canada, induces any other persons to accept or agree to accept any commission or engagement in any such armed forces, such persons shall be guilty of an offence under this Act.⁴⁷

Just as it was illegal to volunteer for a foreign war that was not officially condoned by the Canadian government, it was equally a crime to recruit for such a cause. As it was a punishable offence, this meant that there also needed to be a set of prescribed punishments. Joining the International Brigades was:

Punishable by fine not exceeding two thousand dollars, or imprisonment for a term not exceeding two years, with or without hard labour, or by both fine and imprisonment; but such offence may be prosecuted summarily in manner provided ... if so prosecuted, such offence shall be punishable by fine not exceeding

⁴⁶ Canada, House of Commons Debates, 29 January 1937 (Ottawa: Queen's Printer, 1937), 387.

⁴⁷ Foreign Enlistment Act, 1937 (see Appendix 4).

five hundred dollars, or by imprisonment not exceeding twelve months ... or by both fine and imprisonment.⁴⁸

Regardless of whether such punishments were handed out, the threat of punishment should be seen as significant on its own and demonstrates the government's view on the conflict. However, the RCMP was uncertain as to whether or not the Act would be applied. In a letter to the Minister of Justice, RCMP Commissioner MacBrien wrote:

It would be appreciated if we could be advised as to whether you desire that the provisions of the Foreign Enlistment Act should be strictly enforced ... It is pointed out that the whole question of recruitment of volunteers for the Spanish Civil War is one which is cloaked with secrecy and unless secret informers are employed who can be used to give evidence in Court it will undoubtedly be a very difficult — if not impossible — matter to secure convictions in respect to the Foreign Enlistment Act ... The whole question regarding the action to be taken in connection with the Foreign Enlistment Act appears to be entirely dependent upon the wishes of the Government in this connection.⁴⁹

This uncertainty and general questions regarding the applicability of the Act resulted in no charges being laid, although the threat of prosecution was leveraged. The Foreign Enlistment Act was a product of fear. The activity of communists in Canada was monitored by the RCMP, however once the volunteers went overseas to Spain, they came in contact with an international communist community; they

⁴⁸ It is interesting to note that this section has remained unchanged, with the exact same punishments applicable since 1937. Although outside the scope of this study, I am unaware of the Foreign Enlistment Act being applied to any other conflict since it was passed. This demonstrates how the act was specifically crafted to deal with the problem of the Spanish Civil War. To date, it has not been repealed and has been brought up in debate over recognition as will be discussed

⁴⁹ LAC, RG 146, vol.4183, CSIS files 95-A-00088, Recruiting for Spanish Army Canada, part 3, box 58, letter from MacBrien to Lapointe, 1 September 1937.

would form connections with other like-minded people, and with the Comintern. These connections were worrying enough on their own, but the volunteers would also receive military training. Combine this training in military tactics with political indoctrination and the volunteers returning to Canada at the end of the war were much more threatening and worrisome for the government than the unemployed workers who had left. When confronted with the reality of Canadians volunteering abroad to fight in units organized and armed by the Soviet Union, King and Ernest Lapointe worried not only that they may be “viewed as ... being ‘soft’ on communism,” but that these volunteers, who left as idealists, would come home as battle-hardened revolutionaries.⁵⁰

This was why on 30 July 1937 an Order-in-Council was made to apply the Foreign Enlistment Act. The Order-in-Council was necessary because the Foreign Enlistment Act on its own, only applied to foreign wars, not civil wars. By issuing this Order-in-Council in July 1937, the government officially took a stand against Canadian participation in the Spanish Civil War. The directive came from the Governor in Council and was created without having to pass through voting in Parliament. This loophole meant that decisions could be made and the Act be applied on a case-by-case basis; therefore, showing how it was crafted to suit this specific moment. An editorial in 1937 was quick to realize this fact: “Mr. King chooses this moment to apply to Spain his new Foreign Enlistment Act, and an even newer measure to control the arms traffic. A Canadian ‘Liberal’ Government has

⁵⁰ Tyler Wentzell, “Canada’s Foreign Enlistment Act and the Spanish Civil War,” *Labour/Le Travail* 80(Fall 2017), 224.

placed on the same footing a legally constituted democratic government with which it is supposed to be on friendly diplomatic relations and the rebels against that government.”⁵¹ The *Daily Clarion* also reported on the application of the Act,

Canada demands that Ottawa take action on the Spanish situation. The preliminary step must be to wipe out this shameful Order-in-Council, dictated by Downing Street, Canada’s 50 multi-millionaires and the reactionary circles around Cardinal Villeneuve. This Order-in-Council is contrary to Canadian public opinion, contrary to the pledges given to our people by Mackenzie King and the Liberal Party. It must go!⁵²

The Foreign Enlistment Act takes the sentiments behind the Non-Intervention Agreement one step further by adding the ability to prosecute volunteers. Mackenzie King was quoted as saying that the Act would “prevent Canada from being drawn into foreign conflicts by the actions of manufacturers of munitions or of organizers of recruiting.”⁵³ Mackenzie King’s own sympathies, however, are apparent in a letter addressed to him from a close friend, J.L. Counsell:

Dear Rex: Don’t let us get mixed up in this Spanish situation — Our personal opinions have nothing to do with it. All that I have been trying to do is impress you with the fact that people in Canada and the U.S. are also behind the Loyalists in Spain to a far greater extent than we are perhaps aware of.⁵⁴

From this letter we can see three important points: first, Mackenzie King was a Loyalist/Republican sympathizer himself, and yet King was primarily responsible for the passing of the Foreign Enlistment Act which cut all aid to the Republicans.

⁵¹ “Non-Intervention Making Gesture,” editorial, *Canadian Forum*, September 1937.

⁵² Gregory Kealey and Reg Whitaker, eds. *RCMP Security Bulletins*, 193, Bulletin no.866, 5 August 1937, 318.

⁵³ Hoar, *The Mackenzie-Papineau Battalion*, 105.

⁵⁴ Mackenzie King Papers, Public Archives Canada, J2 Series, vol. 342, S-500.

Second, this letter suggests much popular support for the Republican cause, and perhaps that it had been underestimated. Finally, the letter indirectly brings to light the problem of support from Québec. The majority of Canada was English and most English-speaking Canadians were supportive of the Republic, yet Québec was an important Liberal stronghold in this period and to anger Québec would mean fewer votes come the next election. This demonstrates the quandary that Mackenzie King found himself in in 1937 and explains his thinking behind the Foreign Enlistment Act. Although the Foreign Enlistment Act was passed into legislation nine months after the conflict started; from the very beginning King was against participation as a way to keep the balance between French and English voters. The English may have been more supportive of the Republic, but the French were more outspoken in their opposition. Given these two competing factors, King chose to risk the wrath of those sympathetic to the Republican cause. This is evident in his speech given to the League of Nations on 26 September 1936, when he stated: “Canada does not propose to be dragged into a war in which she has no interest and over the origin of which she has no responsibility or control through any automatic obligations. This is simple doctrine and sensible.”⁵⁵

Even this statement was made with Canadian public opinion in mind. Mackenzie King was supremely conscious of how influential public opinion was. Therefore, the views of his constituency may have swayed his political decisions, as a way to maintain his position in office and improve his chances of re-election.

⁵⁵ *Ottawa Journal*, 30 September 1936.

Taking these different factors into account, we can see the Foreign Enlistment Act as a way to legislate the problem of support out of existence. It appeased the majority of Québécois while at the same time not alienating English voters, though “it can also be construed as a policy of appeasement towards the fascist powers in Europe that ultimately led to World War II.”⁵⁶

When looking at all of the complicating factors involved in determining whether to intervene in the Spanish Civil War, western governments faced numerous challenges. Fear of communism was one of the major obstacles — for capitalist nations, communism threatened to upend their economies and social hierarchies, so how could they provide aid to the Spanish Republican government that was seen as Red? In addition to this, there was a fear of being embroiled in another “Great War.” Most countries were still recovering from the First World War and were not in a position to provide aid given that the Great Depression had crippled their economies. This put less pressure on the governments to come to a decision. In Canada, these considerations were all factors that led the government to institute the Foreign Enlistment Act, months after the actual conflict broke out and Canadians had set sail for Spain. Particular to Canada was the need to take an official position in order to minimize the divide between French and English perspectives on the Spanish Civil War. There was also the general fear of the volunteers’ radicalization that precipitated the Foreign Enlistment Act and Canada’s decision to criminalize participation in the Spanish Civil War. However, just

⁵⁶ Wentzell, “Canada’s Foreign Enlistment Act and the Spanish Civil War,” 215.

because a government adopts a particular position does not mean its citizenry follows suit. This was the case for approximately the 1200 Canadians who enlisted with the International Brigades to fight in Spain, in support of the Republicans after April 1937.

Chapter Two: A Difference of Opinion

In the early twentieth century, national security in Canada fell to the Royal North West Mounted Police, which would eventually become the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP). The RCMP's main priority was to identify threats and protect against them. In Canada in the mid-1920s, communism was of particular concern. Many people who were on the political left were classified (rightly or wrongly) as communists. The volunteers in the Mackenzie-Papineau Battalion were

labelled as communists because of their association with the International Brigades and the Comintern. But this view that the volunteers were a threat was not shared by all Canadians. In fact, a large portion of Anglophone Canada was sympathetic to the International Brigades' cause. This difference of opinion is critical when examining the volunteers' campaign for recognition, and determined its outcome. In this discussion, the RCMP represents the official government opinion, because it falls under federal jurisdiction but also because its view shaped the government's view and vice versa. The RCMP's view of the Spanish volunteers came into conflict with that of the general public, however, which held a wholly different interpretation of these volunteers' contributions.

The RCMP was formed in 1920 out of the amalgamation of the Royal North West Mounted Police and Dominion Police.¹ With this union, the RCMP became the only police force with federal jurisdiction, giving the force a great amount of liberty to operate and not many avenues for external oversight. According to the RCMP Act, the highest power lies with the commissioner who "is subject to the approval of the minister responsible for the RCMP, [though] in practice the minister has no channel of communication with members of the Force other than through the commissioner."² This left the RCMP to self-regulate and work autonomously, without much outside intervention. The RCMP's mandate was domestic intelligence and security, this meant that any internal threat, or the collection of information, fell

¹ Lorne Brown and Caroline Brown, *An Unauthorized History of the RCMP* (Toronto: James Lorimer & Company, 1973), 45.

² *Ibid.*, 4.

within its scope and purview. The question of what constitutes an internal threat is crucial to the examination of the volunteers of the Spanish Civil War. Determining why the volunteers were seen as a threat by the RCMP, both during and after the conflict, reveals that the principal hurdle was their perceived political association, which also contributed to the enactment of the Foreign Enlistment Act and would hamper the volunteers' efforts at recognition in the future.

Gregory Kealey describes the RCMP during this period as “nativist, anti-Semitic, and, above all, anti-communist.”³ This nativist ideology was not unique to the RCMP. During this same period, immigration policy was still highly Anglo-centric, with many restrictions being placed on who could enter Canada, including legislation that added additional grounds for denying entry and deportation.⁴ This fear of outsiders was characteristic for the period, but the RCMP took advantage of this fear and exacerbated it. It took ‘outsiders’ and made them target for investigation,

(Those) left-wing radicals who challenged the status quo, ethnic groups who refused to assimilate to the Anglo-Canadian ideal, other minorities who practiced activities deemed immoral by the Canadian majority, and workers of the employed and unemployed variety who protested their economic inequality. In doing so, Mounted

³ Gregory S. Kealey. “Spymasters, Spies, and Their Subjects: The RCMP and Canadian State Repression, 1914-1939” in *Whose National Security? Canadian State Surveillance and the Creation of Enemies*, Gary Kinsman, Dieter K. Buse, Mercedes Steedman, eds. (Toronto: Between the Lines, 2000), 19.

⁴ “A Hundred Years of Immigration to Canada 1900-1999,” *Canadian Council for Refugees*. Accessed: November 11, 2018. <http://ccrweb.ca/en/hundred-years-immigration-canada-1900-1999>

Policemen made themselves indispensable to the Canadian state, ensuring the forces' survival.⁵

The RCMP was responsible for the protection of Canada from both internal and external threats, yet their main concern was the threat from within, and at the top of this threat list was communism. Prior to this period, the job of the RNWMP and the RCMP had been mainly to protect Canadian interests from outside threats, like the Fenians, but with the rise of communism, they faced a new challenge. This made communism the first internal political threat, something they had not previously had to concern themselves with, and did not know exactly how to handle. Communism appeared on international radars after the successful Bolshevik Revolution of 1917, but in Canada, the threat of communism manifested itself nationally during the Red Scare in the 1920s and 30s.

The Red Scare in Canada was the event that pushed the fear of communism to the forefront of national conversations about radicalism. Although briefly discussed in chapter one, it would be a disservice not to look at this event in order to better understand the RCMP's involvement and how this singular episode came to encapsulate the nation's fear to the extent that communism became one of the RCMP's central concerns from the 1920s through to the end of the Cold War. As will be seen over the course of this chapter, however, there are specific moments when the volunteers were seen in a positive light, at least by a portion of society, which complicates the picture. These distinctions between viewpoints are important and

⁵ Steven Roy Hewitt, "Old Myths Die Hard': The Transformation of the Mounted Police in Alberta and Saskatchewan, 1914-1939" (PhD Thesis, University of Saskatchewan, 1997), iii-iv.

will recur throughout this thesis to demonstrate the change over time in perception and memory of the volunteers.

To say that the RCMP's concern about communism was overblown would be taking this fear out of context; what must be remembered is that during this period, communism was on the rise globally, with the same concerns manifesting themselves in France, England and the United States, all around the same time. However, this does not mean that the RCMP was not using this new threat to its own benefit. In the face of a legitimate threat in the government's eyes, a force was needed to counter it, and this was the role the RCMP filled. Indeed, the organization that benefited the most from the Red Scare was the Royal North West Mounted Police, which would become the Royal Canadian Mounted Police. Even with the advent of the Second World War, the RCMP's focus remained on the communist threat, so much so that the RCMP commissioner had planned for "mass arrests and incarcerations, primarily of Communist agitators; he asked for seven hundred officers to carry out the sweep."⁶ This was planned near the start of the Second World War, at time when Nazism and fascism were also growing in Canada. Despite this, "authorities [continued] to view Communists as the state's primary enemies."⁷ This demonstrates how fully the RCMP was committed to fighting this 'enemy' and how important it made their position in Canadian society. The RCMP acted as the front line of attack against communism from the time of its inception in the 1920s

⁶ David Goutor, *A Chance to Fight Hitler: A Canadian Volunteer in the Spanish Civil War* (Toronto: Between the Lines, 2018), 128.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 127.

through to being supplanted by CSIS in the 1980s as the main intelligence gathering force in Canada. Throughout this period of sixty years, the fight against communism remained a primary objective.

The RCMP's greatest fear was that the spread of communism would eventually culminate in a Canadian Bolshevik Revolution. Although it was a concern in Canada, this fear of communism was also occurring on an international scale. In Canada, the rise of communism happened at a time when workers felt mistreated by the government, given their large contribution to the war effort in the Great War. Their anger was twofold — first there was the rapid rate of inflation that began with the economy's recovery in 1916 and, secondly, was the lack of fair-wage labour as a result of the government's lax labour policy.⁸ These two factors in combination led to a large increase in labour unrest as demonstrated in the increased number of strikes from 1916 through to 1921: there were 1,781 strikes across Canada in this period.⁹

The RCMP implemented various initiatives over the years to deal with the threat of communism. Censorship impeded what was and could be published, and the spread of political ideas became more and more restricted. Not only was the 'radical' literature censored, but so too was the wearing of certain badges or emblems denoting particular groups. This made it harder for people to easily

⁸ Gregory S. Kealey, *Spying on Canadians: The Royal Canadian Mounted Police Security Service and the Origins of the Long Cold War* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2017), 77.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 73. Table discusses strike activity in Canada, 1912-21.

identify other like-minded individuals and thereby harder to outwardly attract new members and increase membership in labour organizations. Stopping these groups from reaching more members meant that they were less of a threat, although the ultimate goal was to disband them completely. Another side effect of banning symbols of communism was that there appeared at least physically to be fewer Communists, thereby making the RCMP look more efficient at the same time.

Information about the inner workings of the RCMP in these formative years comes from Bulletins published by the RCMP to inform political authorities about the activity of potential threats. There are reports that predate the RCMP and were compiled by the Criminal Investigations Branch of the RNWMP giving us information into the investigations conducted in 1919. The majority of the information provided in the *RCMP Security Bulletins: The Early Years, 1919-1929* revolve around labour agitations and socialist/Bolshevik revolutionaries. For example on 19 August 1926, there was a report of agitation among Ukrainians in Drumheller: "We have received a survey of the situation among the Drumheller Ukrainians which shows renewed activity of communist agitators among them."¹⁰ Not only was the RCMP aware of a play that was put on, but they had detailed enough information from their agent that they knew "no Bolshevik songs were sung or played, so as to not offend the English public. There were about 200 present

¹⁰ Gregory S. Kealey and Reg Whitaker, eds., "No. 332 Weekly Summary Notes Regarding Revolutionary Organizations and Agitators in Canada Report," *R.C.M.P. Security Bulletins: The Early Years, 1919-1929* (St. John's: Canadian Committee on Labour History, 1994), August 19, 1926, 337.

composed of Ukrainians, some English, Jews, Italians and others.”¹¹ Although this may seem insignificant, just a gathering and a play, the detail of the report and the thoroughness of the notes demonstrates just how seriously this threat was taken, that an event like a play would garner this sort of attention. During this early period, there were numerous murmurings in political circles about the potential in Canada for the spread of these “dangerous ideologies”. This atmosphere of fear led to an investigation of communist threats conducted by the Acting Chief Commissioner of the Dominion Police who concluded, “The sum total of the reports is that we have nothing to fear from them at the present time.”¹² However, this did not dissuade the RNWMP from the efforts and surveillance that eventually led to “the passage of repressive legislation that allowed the use of the War Measures Act to prosecute socialist and labour leaders.”¹³ Even though there were no specific findings that pointed to a real immediate threat, steps were taken in order to deal with this perceived problem. These steps included throwing perceived agitators into internment camps following the end of the First World War.¹⁴ This

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² LAC, Borden Papers, Vol. 104, File Oc 519, Cawdron to Minister of Justice, March 3, 1918.

¹³ Gregory S. Kealey and Reg Whitaker, eds. *R.C.M.P. Security Bulletins: The Early Years, 1919-1929* (St. John's: Canadian Committee on Labour History, 1994), 11.

¹⁴ List of “Chief Agitators in Canada 1919” was compiled by the Public Safety Branch of the Department of Justice and appears as a section in the RCMP Security Bulletins, *The Early Years, 1919-1929*. This list includes the names, known addresses, offences and any official findings of the agitators. Not all agitators were sent to internment camps as there were different punishments depending on the crime, such as fines for possession of prohibited literature. However, the composition and detailed nature of the list demonstrates the seriousness with which the Dominion Police in this case saw communism. The RCMP had similar practices; in their case they kept Personal Files on individuals of interest rather than a list.

demonstrates how seriously communism was taken by those in power, to go so far as to be able to prosecute offenders under the War Measures Act exemplifies the lengths to which the RCMP and Canadian government were willing to go counter the threat of communism in Canada.

All of the Security Bulletins collected from 1919-1929, in some form or another center around labour radicalism and/or communism. One of the preoccupations of the RCMP in this period was to keep tabs on communists' movements and events, be it a church anniversary in Manitoba, where "the Winnipeg Labour Church celebrated its second anniversary on 22nd August by an open air meeting in Victoria Park"¹⁵ or the strike at Reserve Mines in Cape Breton, where "400 men were idle owing to a strike in the Collierie No's. 8 and 10 Reserve Mine Cape Breton ... The men went on strike on account of a checking system...."¹⁶ This labour radicalism was feared to be a precursor to communism, and thus was treated as a threat.¹⁷

¹⁵ Gregory S. Kealey and Reg Whitaker, eds. "No. 39 Notes on the Work of the C.I.B. Division for the week ending 2nd September" *R.C.M.P. Security Bulletins, The Early Years, 1919-1929* (St. John's: Canadian Committee on Labour History, 1994), 2 September 1920, 88.

¹⁶ Gregory S. Kealey and Reg Whitaker, eds., "No. 43 Notes of the Work of the C.I.B. Division for the week ending 30th September," *R.C.M.P. Security Bulletins, The Early Years, 1919-1929* (St. John's: Canadian Committee on Labour History, 1994), 30 September 1920, 181.

¹⁷ While communism was inarguably in the sights of the RCMP, it was not the only concern, as drugs and alcohol control were also high priority in the 1920s and 30s. But it is worth noting that the police force were becoming "more intrusive in terms of state surveillance of the populace."

Greg Marquis, *The Vigilant Eye: Policing Canada from 1867 to 9/11* (Winnipeg: Fernwood Publishing, 2016), 38.

The RCMP's perspective persuaded many, but not all, in this period. Jack Pickersgill conducted an analysis of an RCMP intelligence report in 1939 for Prime Minister King and found:

- 1) An inability to distinguish between 'facts' and 'hearsay' ;
- 2) An 'anti-Red complex' ...
- 3) No discrimination between legitimate social and political criticism and subversive doctrine;
- 4) An almost exclusive pre-occupation with so-called subversive organizations, and, even in this field, very little information about Nazis or Fascists;
- 5) No evidence of any suspected sabotage or espionage;
- 6) No suggestion that there is any co-ordination with the Military Intelligence, or with the Immigration authorities, or with the Department of External Affairs, or even with the Censorship.

It is evident that the police are attending and reporting on often completely harmless meetings, and spying on the daily activities of peaceful law-abiding citizens. In itself this may not be very serious, although it would seem to be undesirable in a free country. It is, however, somewhat disturbing to discover that the police are setting themselves up as self-appointed censors of political opinion in the Community, especially when they regard the mildest expressions of liberal views as evidence as of Communism.¹⁸

From the surveillance that the RCMP undertook and following the line of thinking that Pickersgill noted in his report, the RCMP assumed that the volunteers who went to Spain were all Communists and therefore a threat. However, in a CBC Radio Interview, former Mac-Pap Mac Reynolds explained that there was a combination of factors that led Canadians to participate and although there were Communists involved, what would come to be the Mackenzie-Papineau Battalion was formed by a group of men with varying motivations.

¹⁸ LAC, Jack Pickersgill "Note on a War-Time Intelligence Service", 27 November 1939, and "Analysis of the Intelligence Bulletin Issued at R.C.M.P. Headquarters, October 30,1939" (C257902-C257910)

There were guys who were running away from their wives. There were guys who were sick of living on relief. There were guys who were hotshot Communist Party members. That's what the International Brigades were. It wasn't a bunch of guys all shouting, "Hooray for Stalin!" and "Over the top!" That's ridiculous. It was just you and me and him and fifteen other guys with all sorts of reasons for joining an army.¹⁹

Another possible motivation for the volunteers was fascism itself. Fascist groups began to form uninhibited in Canadian cities like Montreal, so not only was fascism a problem abroad, but also at home. "We had Armand Arcand, who used to use his bully boys up and down the main streets ... generally showing that Nazis were very strong."²⁰ Nazism was not restricted to Europe, and before leaving for Spain, Ross Russell, a Mackenzie-Papineau Battalion volunteer, claims that "we were fighting on the home front for several years against fascism in Canada."²¹

The RCMP needed a way to keep its detachments abreast of its efforts and the information gathered in relation to its fight against communism. This made the Security Bulletins important documents that served the purpose of keeping the upper brass and politicians informed of the efforts being taken by the RCMP to counter the threat of communism. These weekly bulletins were filled with information from informants and undercover operatives on various organizations and activities occurring across Canada. They also kept the threat of communism in

¹⁹ Hugh Garner, interview with Mac Reynolds, CBC Radio Archives and Library Archives Canada c. 1965.

²⁰ House of Commons, Minutes of Proceedings and Evidence of the Standing Committee on Veteran Affairs, December 18, 1986, 1:15.

²¹ Ibid.

the spotlight and provided important information that aided in conducting raids and keeping tabs on important figures within the Communist Party.

The Foreign Enlistment Act, by criminalizing recruitment and enlistment into the International Brigades, gave more power and purchase to the RCMP's fight against Communism. The flagrant flaunting of this order by Canadian volunteers incited the RCMP; no longer were these people an idle concern but by going to Spain, they were the manifestation of the government's greatest fear, they would return to Canadian soil as battle-hardened revolutionaries that would spread their ideology and now had the battle experience through the conflict in Spain to truly be a threat.

With this in the mind, the RCMP was adamant in its pursuit to either stop the return or prosecute the volunteers for their actions. In either case, it needed inter-departmental co-operation at the governmental level to succeed. Both of these possibilities were pursued to an extent. On the immigration front, letters were exchanged between RCMP Commissioner MacBrien and Minister of Justice Ernest Lapointe that said:

Any action, therefore, that the Immigration authorities could take in the manner described in our letter to the Under-Secretary of State would undoubtedly result in the exclusion of a certain number of individuals who had learned the essentials of revolutionary warfare in Spain and who might, at a future date, apply this education to local circumstances in this country.²²

²² CSIS files from access to information request 86-A-57, Letter from MacBrien to Lapointe, August 25, 1937 as cited in Petrou, *Renegades: Canadians in the Spanish Civil War*, 171.

This restriction on re-immigration seems to have been limited to the 'foreign element' of the Canadian contingent of the International Brigades. This foreign component of Canadian volunteers however made up a large portion of the known volunteers. According to the most recent compendium of volunteers, approximately seventy-eight percent of the Canadian volunteers were born elsewhere.²³ If the RCMP had succeeded in banning the 'foreigners' from returning after the end of the war, then they would be stopping what they saw as agitators and destabilizing agents from returning to Canada. "These youths are being sent to Spain largely for the sake of gaining experience in practical revolutionary work and will return to this country to form the nucleus of a training corps."²⁴ This means that those who did return were considered a threat, but in addition to this they were also categorized as undesirables based on their status as foreigners. As MacBrien stated in a letter "we are getting rid of a lot undesirables who may never return."²⁵ The volunteers' return was a topic of discussion within the House of Commons, a Member of Parliament from Nipissing asked, "what help, if any, was given by the Canadian government to facilitate movement of the said nationals, back to Canada?" Prime Minister King answered this question by stating that no "financial assistance for

²³ This percentage is composed of those whose place of birth is known, and leaves out all those whose place of birth is unknown. Canadians for this purpose are those born in Canada, listed as Canadian, French Canadian and Aboriginal in Petrou's *Volunteers Index* pages 190-241.

²⁴ CSIS files from access to information request 86-A-57, Letter from MacBrien to Skelton, 8 July 1937 as cited in *Ibid.*, 170.

²⁵ LAC, RG 146, vol. 4183, CSIS files 95-A-00088, Recruiting for Spanish Army Canada, part 3, box 58, Handwritten note attached to a memorandum from Stuart Taylor Wood to MacBrien, August 28 1937.

transportation or other purposes” was provided by the government.²⁶ According to Hugh Keenleyside, First Secretary of the Department of External Affairs, there were three options the government could take:

- A. Readmit all Canadian nationals by birth ...
- B. Readmit all Canadian nationals by naturalization or domicile ... except those few against whom some specific complaint unconnected with the Spanish war can be advanced.
- C. Forego any attempt to punish any of the returned volunteers.²⁷

Given the public sympathy that will be discussed in the following section, the government was left little choice other than to readmit the volunteers and not pursue any criminal charges.

Several factors made these volunteers so undesirable in the eyes of the government that it would try to find ways to bar their re-entry to Canada. Approximately seventy-six percent of the Canadians in Spain were communists, seventy-eight percent were foreign-born, and all were assumed to pose a threat upon their return.²⁸

²⁶ House of Commons Debates, February 15, 1939, 958.

²⁷ LAC, RG25 G1. Records of the Department of External Affairs, Vol. 1833, File 291-E-1. “British Practice re. Inquiries re. British Subjects in Spain. Repatriation of Canadian Volunteers from Spain. November 1937 -March 1939” (Memorandum from H. Keenleyside: Return of Canadian Volunteers from Spain, February 24, 1938).

²⁸ Petrou considers communists to be either full-fledge members or members of the Young Communist League. Information exists on the political parties to which 877 Canadian volunteers belonged. At least 613 were full Communist Party members before they arrived in Spain, and 56 belonged to the Young Communist League. Most joined the Communist Party in Canada, but ten did so in the United States, four in Britain, one in Ireland, and one in Yugoslavia. Seven had been party members but were expelled or left the party on their own accord before volunteering. Petrou, *Renegades*, 24.

To prosecute or not That is the question

Although the government saw the volunteers as a threat to be feared, the general public at the time of the conflict felt otherwise. The return of the soldiers was widely publicized in Canadian newspapers. The government was aware of their impending arrival in Halifax on February 3, 1939. Within one day of their return the RCMP had a “complete list of the returning volunteers ... showing name, age, place of birth and ultimate destination in Canada.”²⁹ However, the decision to prosecute the recruitment effort under section 573 of the Criminal Code was already cleared in February 1938.³⁰ The case would consist of the information gathered by the RCMP intelligence officers that had conducted surveillance on recruitment and on the volunteers. Inspector Zaneth coordinated the RCMP in this effort and believed:

There is no doubt that we will be able to establish beyond a shadow of a doubt that the Communist Party is solely responsible for the breach of the act in question ... Once the system has been shown in court, all the leading lights of the Communist Party are equally and criminally responsible ... In other words, this crime was not committed by a group of individuals but by the Communist Party. We can, if we wish, charge as many and as few as we like.³¹

However, this enthusiasm and certainty was short-lived:

If a question were asked on this point, it would be possible to say that the matter was receiving consideration or (and perhaps this would be more suitable for a later stage) that in consideration of the whole situation and of the attitude taken by other countries the Federal

²⁹ RCMP Records, File, “Friends of the Mackenzie-Papineau Battalion (9 July 1938 – 1979).” (RCMP report, Nova Scotia, 4 February 1939).

³⁰ Petrou, *Renegades*, 171.

³¹ LAC, RG 146, vol. 4183, CSIS files 95-A-00088, Recruiting for Spanish Army Canada, part 5-B, box 58, letter from Frank W. Zaneth to Stuart Taylor Wood, March 11, 1938.

Government, so far as it was concerned, had not taken steps to initiate enforcement of penalties.³²

Action was hampered by a lack of support that was necessary to pull off a successful conviction, and difficulty in obtaining proof that the volunteers had fought in Spain. Some volunteers travelled with fake passports. This was discovered after the death of several volunteers in Spain; O.D. Skelton sent the deceaseds' passport information on to Stuart Wood, RCMP Commissioner to notify the next of kin, but for three of the men, no information was found for them at the passport office in Ottawa.³³ In addition to having trouble determining who exactly had gone the Spain, there was also the problem that for prosecution to be successful it required the full cooperation of regional RCMP branches, especially those on the west coast, where the Communist Party had a stronghold and which was also the location of most of the recruiting efforts. Although this effort was spearheaded in Ottawa, it's clear that not all RCMP branches were on the same page. "Raids would be the means of arousing a moribund force into activity," the Vancouver branch complained. "It is erroneous to state that the Communist Party, at least as far as B.C. is concerned, has been recruiting volunteers for Spain."³⁴ There was a general fear that taking action against this group would urge sympathy for communists. This would have been damaging to the government's image as these men were returning on the losing side of a noble conflict, and many of them came back injured, already encouraging

³² LAC, MG30 E173, Mackenzie Papineau Battalion Collection, vol. 1, file 5 (Memorandum: Spanish Volunteers. February 1, 1939.

³³ LAC, RG 146, vol. 4183, CSIS files 95-A-00088, Recruiting for Spanish Army Canada, part 6, box 58, letter from O.D Skelton to Stuart Taylor Wood, June 1, 1939.

³⁴ LAC, RG 146, vol. 4183, CSIS files 95-A-00088, Recruiting for Spanish Army Canada, part 6, box 58, letter from Cadiz to Stuart Taylor Wood, March 25, 1938.

sympathy. “The exemption of the returned volunteers from prosecution for violation of the Foreign Enlistment Act was influenced by jurisdictional uncertainties, lack of definite evidence of violation, and the fact that other countries had not enforced their Foreign Enlistment Acts.”³⁵

As a result of this uncertainty, shortly after the all clear was given to pursue charging the recruiters, those in charge of the investigation were told to cease and desist. This was a decision that was made with Canadian voters in mind but also with an eye on international relations. Although the Statute of Westminster was passed in 1931, Canada was still very conscious of its ties to Great Britain. By the time prosecution was brought to the table in the Canadian context, Great Britain was already committed to the Non-Intervention Agreement. Canada did have its own Foreign Enlistment Act in place as of July 1937, but prior to 1938, there was only surveillance being done with no clear end goal in sight. This may have been because it would have been difficult to differentiate the volunteers who had left prior to the Act and those that left after. This wariness with regards international relations can be seen when examining the re-admittance of volunteers to Canada. Despite the RCMP’s insistence that the volunteers were dangerous, “the Department of External Affairs was particularly anxious not to offend Britain and France by failing to co-operate in the international efforts to defuse the Spanish conflict.”³⁶ If they could not pursue the volunteers then why not attempt to charge the recruiters?

³⁵ Martin Lobigs, “Canadian Response to the Mackenzie-Papineau Battalion, 1936-1939,” (M.A. thesis, University of New Brunswick, 1992), 276.

³⁶ Lobigs, “Canadian Response to the Mackenzie-Papineau Battalion,” 275.

However, by turning their attention to the recruiters, this did nothing to abate the public sympathy for the Republican cause. “The return of the volunteers was given extensive coverage in the liberal daily press. The men were front page news. The articles were sympathetic. The heroism of the men was praised. Their claim to have fought for democracy was not disputed.”³⁷ This meant that even though the government could attempt to pursue the recruiters, the public was still sympathetic, and saw the volunteers as “defeated Canadian boys who had done their best in a honourable cause.”³⁸

This demonstrates just how important image was to the Canadian government at the time. If they were to prosecute volunteers in the Spanish Civil War on the side of the Republicans, it would be seen as picking on the losing side. The soldiers had come home beaten and bruised. They were the perceived losers of the conflict and therefore had the sympathy of the public on their side. Prime Minister King wanted “to avoid debate on Canada’s response to the critical situation in Europe” and the diversity of opinion between French and English Canada.³⁹

Public reactions to the Brigades

The public reception and perception of the returning veterans played a role in the government’s treatment of them. Publicity in the newspapers contributed but it was the public’s reception and celebration of their return that will be examined in

³⁷ Ibid., 282.

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ Ibid., 288.

this section. There are four locations that will be examined to attempt to better understand the public's perception of the volunteers on their return; Halifax, Montreal, Timmins and Toronto. By examining Toronto and Montreal we will be able to see if there is any difference between French and English receptions in a major centre, Halifax was the volunteers' first point of contact upon their return, and Timmins will provide a more rural perspective. What all four locations have in common is that there was newspaper coverage of the veteran's returns, but the celebrations took different forms.

Three of the four locations had crowds gathered at their respective stations to greet the returning volunteers. Halifax, unlike the rest of the locations to be examined, did not have the same fanfare. Indeed, there was very little in way of reception for the soldiers disembarking the boats. There was a small group of supporters that welcomed the volunteers.⁴⁰ According to the memoir of Ronald Liversedge, a Spanish volunteer, there was no huge procession or large gatherings of people awaiting their return, rather "half a dozen people to meet us. There were friends of some of the returning men."⁴¹ It must be kept in mind that at the time of his return, Liversedge was part of a much smaller wave of returning soldiers.⁴² This small crowd can be attributed to the fact that not many volunteers were from the Maritimes, with many more volunteers coming from central and western Canada.

⁴⁰ Gregory Clark, "270 Spanish Dons Sing 'O Canada' at Halifax Clenching Their Fists," *Toronto Daily Star*, February 3, 1939.

⁴¹ Ronald Liversedge, *Mac-Pap: Memoir of a Canadian in the Spanish Civil War* (Vancouver: New Star Books, 2013) 154.

⁴² *Ibid.*

Despite the few members on hand to welcome the original larger batch of volunteers home, there were still words offered that reflected the sentiments of the Canadian public towards these brave volunteers. The *Daily Clarion*, a Canadian communist newspaper wrote:

Greetings and welcome home. Your sacrifice in the cause of the Spanish Democracy helped lay the foundation of the ultimate defeat of fascist economic and military aggression which threatens world peace. Your courage and devotion are now needed at home to make democracy better serve the interests of our people and the nation.⁴³

This was sent from a Toronto union and it is unclear how this message was delivered. Regardless of its mode of delivery, this note suggests the perception of the role of the International Brigades in their fight against Franco and fascism. “The volunteers were shabbily dressed, some in berets, others in caps, but all wearing a small yellow badge, a token of the welcoming committee which had greeted the entire Canadian troupe at Halifax.”⁴⁴ This greeting group, however, is not mentioned in any of the Halifax newspapers. Upon boarding the train, 1,650 sandwiches were provided for the journey from Halifax to Montreal.⁴⁵

Timmins is a small gold mining community in Northern Ontario, and “stands fourth in the list of Canadian cities sending men to aid the cause of the Spanish Government”⁴⁶ A band met them at the station, and the day that they returned,

⁴³ *Daily Clarion*, February 4, 1939.

⁴⁴ “Hundreds Crowd Station to Welcome Veterans of Spain; Tired and Hungry” *Timmins Daily Press* vol. VI no. 118 (6 February 1939), 1.

⁴⁵ Peck, *Red Moon Over Spain*, 53.

⁴⁶ “Porcupine Veterans of War Return Next Week,” *Timmins Daily Press* vol. VI no. 115 (2 February 1939), 1.

hundreds flocked to the station to welcome the soldiers home.⁴⁷ “Separate banquets [were] held for the returning veterans in Schumacher and Timmins.”⁴⁸ The veterans were “greeted by a cheering crowd and welcomed by Councillors McNeil and Armstrong.”⁴⁹ In their speech, they offer much praise, ““They went to fight for democracy ... The fight in Spain has been our fight and we must appreciate the work of these heroes of the Spanish conflict.””⁵⁰ In addition to this warm welcome, a parade was also planned in honour of the volunteers that would lead them to the hall where the dinner and reception were held. After greeting them at the station, “the veterans and welcoming friends marched to the Ukrainian Hall, where they held a welcoming meeting.”⁵¹ While the government saw these volunteers as criminal, dangerous and suspect, the public in Timmins received them as heroes and feted them accordingly. This type of reception was mirrored in other cities — and noted in the newspapers — and this coverage shows that at the moment of their return the volunteers were generally seen in a positive light.

In the case of Toronto, they were welcomed with equal enthusiasm at Union Station, where the veterans were greeted by a crowd of 10,000.⁵² On February 6th, the *Toronto Star* published a full page of photos showing reunions of soldiers with their loved ones and friends. This feature showed what these men had left behind in

⁴⁷ Ibid., See Appendix 5.

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ Ibid., 2.

⁵² “Boys of the Mackenzie-Papineau Battalion Accorded Heroes Welcome by Toronto Friends and Relatives,” *Toronto Daily Star*, 6 February 1939, 17. See Appendix 6.

order to fight for a worthy cause, and the sheer elation and pride at their return. This press coverage shows that these volunteers' return was a story that the public was interested in hearing about, a human interest piece, but to have such a large turn-out for their return home, we can clearly see that these veterans had a large base of support from the general public. In addition to welcoming the veterans at the train station, there was a meeting at Massey Hall, where the "crowd rose and cheered for five minutes" and funds were raised "for medical care and financial help" for the recently returned veterans of the Spanish Civil War.⁵³

Montreal presents a slightly different dynamic compared to the rest of Canada. Québec was home to some of the strongest resistance to the International Brigades. The *Montreal Gazette* published numerous articles relating to non-intervention at the beginning of the conflict, one notes: "it is a marvel any sane person would stand for any leader who advocated armed conflict. Yet some attack Chamberlain for his policy of appeasement. Do they wish to make other people undergo the terrible experiences that Spain is going through?"⁵⁴ Franco sympathizers were most numerous in Québec, as we have seen, but despite this, there was still a surprisingly a warm welcome in Montreal, as the *Montreal Standard* reported. "When the train was sighted entering the station a great roar went up from the crowd as they surged for the gates."⁵⁵ This crowd was estimated to

⁵³ Peck, *Red Moon Over Spain*, 53.

⁵⁴ "The Debris of War in Spain," editorial, *Montreal Gazette*, 17 February 1939.

⁵⁵ "Throng of Sympathizers Greet Party of Canadians Returning from Spain," *The Montreal Standard*, 4 February 1939. See Appendix 7.

number approximately 4,000.⁵⁶ This does not mean that there still wasn't opposition to the volunteers, for example, the mayor of Montreal refused the veterans quarters.⁵⁷ Other cities, however, were more willing to provide assistance, like lunch that was served at Windsor Station.⁵⁸ An enthusiastic crowd welcomed thirty-one BC volunteers at the Vancouver CPR station on February 10, 1939. In the crowd were Mayor Lyle Telford and Nathan Nemetz, future Chief Justice of British Columbia, who had acted as the Vancouver Consul to the Spanish Republic throughout the war.

This type of enthusiastic reception was at odds with how the government perceived the volunteers. The public that turned out to the welcome receptions greeted the men as heroes, while the government and the RCMP perceived them as dangerous and criminals. These two perceptions co-existed and perhaps that is why in 1939 upon the volunteers' return home and the publicity that their return garnered, the same government that passed the Foreign Enlistment Act and made it applicable to the conflict in Spain then passed an Order-in-Council which revoked provisions of the Act applicable to Spain.⁵⁹

⁵⁶ Lobigs, "Canadian Response to the Mackenzie-Papineau Battalion," 170.

⁵⁷ *Montreal Gazette*, 8 February 1939.

⁵⁸ Peck, *Red Moon Over Spain*, 53.

⁵⁹ Lobigs, "Canadian Response to the Mackenzie-Papineau Battalion", 261. See Library Archives Canada, Reel T-5113, Records of the Department of External Affairs (Order in Council P.C. 1463).

Chapter Three: Fighting to be Veterans

They are members of the MacKenzie-Papineau Battalion, who volunteered to fight on the side of Spain's Republican government, and although they fought what they believed to be a just war against fascism, these soldiers have never received official recognition in this country for their efforts.¹

The 1980s brought the beginning of efforts by the surviving members of the Mackenzie-Papineau Battalion to gain recognition for their contributions to the struggle against fascism and inclusion in the national heroic narratives associated with Canadian veterans of other wars. The end of the Cold War meant that the communist threat was perceived as eliminated and the stigma attached to the Battalion, they hoped, was dissipating. The fiftieth anniversary of the end of the Second World War brought renewed attention to its crimes, not just on the part of the Axis powers but also the Allies, and, as Elazar Barkan describes, a new international climate was emerging that supported restitution and apology for past injustices, "where appearing compassionate and holding the high moral ground

¹ House of Commons, Minutes of Proceedings and Evidence of the Standing Committee on Veteran Affairs, December 18, 1986, 1:14.

[had] become a good investment.”² These factors, and the veterans’ age, led to demands for recognition from the Canadian government.³

These issues of historical wrongdoings which came to the forefront in the 1980s and 1990s led to interactions between perpetrators and victims in “a new form of political negotiations that enabled the rewriting of memory and historical identity in ways that both can share.”⁴ Increasingly, as nations began to admit to wrongdoings, this brought national histories into question. In light of this shift, history went from being indisputable to being contested and challenged.⁵ This is an important change because it allowed opportunities for those left out of the

² Elazar Barkan, *The Guilt of Nations: Restitution and Negotiating Historical Injustices* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2001), xvi.

Restitution strictly refers to the return of the specific actual belongings that were confiscated, seized, or stolen, such as land, art, ancestral remains, and the like. Reparations refers to some form of material recompense for that which cannot be returned, such as human life, a flourishing culture and economy, and identity. Apology refers not to the transfer of material items or resources at all but to an admission of wrongdoing, a recognition of its effects and an obligation to its victims. However, these are all different levels of acknowledgment that together create a mosaic of recognition by perpetrators for the need to amend past injustices. (Ibid, xix)

Restitution, for the remainder of this paper will encompass all three of these terms, just to simplify and avoid any confusion. This restitution in a way was born out of guilt, guilt in turn implies a harmful action which necessarily requires a victim. The preoccupation with morality came to dominate the public arena and there was “this sense that restitution traverses the legal boundaries between actual restitution, reparation, compensation, and even apologies for wrongdoings and acquires cultural and political significance.” (Ibid.)

³ While demanding for recognition at a federal level may seem like a large leap from how histories are cemented, it should be remembered that in the Canadian context, commemoration efforts were frequently undertaken on a voluntary basis. If and when the government did intercede it was because “influential and persistent individuals pushed levels of government to act.”

Cecilia Morgan, *Commemorating Canada: History, Heritage and Memory, 1850s-1990s* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2016), 105-106.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Ibid., x.

traditional national narrative to have their stories heard, and if successful in their campaign, to be included in the forging of a new narrative.⁶

At the same time that this climate of apology and restitution emerged, heroic narratives were also further entrenched. The 'Greatest Generation' version of the history of the Second World War, is an example of the heroic narratives that became predominant in this period. According to this interpretation, the generation which fought in the Second World War is one that "stayed true to their values of personal responsibility, duty, honour, and faith" and "met historic challenges and (produced) achievements of a magnitude the world had never before witnessed."⁷ This cult of heroism, though most predominant in the United States, is also present in Canada, for example in the Highway of Heroes. "In December 2009 thousands lined the Highway of Heroes to pay homage to the funeral cortège of a single Canadian soldier."⁸ This celebration of soldiers as heroes is the kind of respect and status that the volunteers of the Mackenzie-Papineau Battalion sought for themselves. By being recognized alongside veterans of the Canadian Armed Forces, they were seeking recognition and acknowledgement: "we are not asking to be treated in the same, identical manner. We recognize that we preceded the regular army of Canada in

⁶ Benedict Anderson in *Imagined Communities*, asserts that "nationality, or as one might prefer to put it in view of that word's multiple significances, nation-ness, as well as nationalism, are cultural artefacts of a particular kind." Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (New York: Verso, 1983), 4.

⁷ Tom Brokaw, *The Greatest Generation* (New York: Random House, 1998) xx, xxi.

⁸ Ian McKay and Jamie Swift, *Warrior Nation: Rebranding Canada in an Age of Anxiety* (Toronto: Between the Lines, 2012), 283.

fighting fascism. The fact that we were the first is good ...”⁹ Others have also lauded their efforts. Mr. Campbell, the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Veteran Affairs said: “as soldiers they were superb and Canadians in general regard the performance of the Mackenzie-Papineau Battalion as heroic.”¹⁰ While the veterans grant that they are not the exact same as the veterans of the Second World War, they certainly attempt to draw parallels between their experiences. For starters, they claim that their enemy was the same — fascism, and rather than branding themselves as communists, the volunteers opted for the term anti-fascist, as it was more widely accepted and did not have the same stigma attached to it. Even for Canadians, fascism wasn’t this foreign imagined enemy, it was alive and present in Canada. “In the city of Montreal ... we had a native fascist party. They would go up and down the Main Street, smashing windows, marking swastikas. The police were not doing anything about it.”¹¹ They believed that if they were successful in Spain, it would stop the spread of fascism, which in turn would help on the home front. They argued that Spain was the first of two acts for the Germans; that they used the conflict to train their troops and test their equipment like “the 88 mm guns and the Stuka dive bombers...became the basis for the blitzkrieg in the Second World War”, and that the Second World War, was a “continuation of the war in Spain in which we

⁹ House of Commons, Minutes of Proceedings and Evidence of the Standing Committee on Veteran Affairs, December 18, 1986, 1:18.

¹⁰ Commons Debates, Private Members’ Motion, December 15, 1980, 5765, box 9, file 14 Spanish Civil War Collection.

¹¹ House of Commons, Minutes of Proceedings and Evidence of the Standing Committee on Veteran Affairs, December 18, 1986, 1:13.

actively participated.”¹² There was undoubtedly a “parallel between what occurred in Spain and what occurred in the 1939-1945 war.”¹³

To have one’s history accepted into the mainstream requires campaigning and lobbying. The first step in this is publicizing that history and, to that end, the veterans of the Mackenzie-Papineau Battalion began to organize themselves to release their own version of their involvement in the Spanish Civil War in the late 1970s. As with the history of World War One veterans, the narrative that the Spanish Civil War veterans were creating was a “complex mixture of fact, wishful thinking, half-truth and outright invention.”¹⁴ This effort was spearheaded by Ross Russell, President of the Veterans of the International Brigades – Mackenzie-Papineau Battalion of Canada (VMPB), with a fellow veteran W.C. Beeching, who wrote *Canadian Volunteers Spain, 1936-1939*.¹⁵ The process of compiling information began some forty years after the conflict ended, and was aided by a \$16,900.00 grant from the Canadian Government, Department of Health and Welfare, New Horizons section.¹⁶ This was meant to be a history that “will record our deeds as patriotic ones, as the first Canadians to take up arms against fascism

¹² Statement from Veterans’ Association to Minister of Veteran Affairs Daniel McDonald, May 20, 1980, box 9, file 11, Spanish Civil War Collection.

¹³ Commons Debates, Private Members’ Motion, December 15, 1980, 5767, box 9, file 14 Spanish Civil War Collection.

¹⁴ Jonathan Franklin William Vance, *Death so Noble: Memory, Meaning, and the First World War* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1997), 3.

¹⁵ Letter to Alan Borovoy, October 31, 1980, box 7, Spanish Civil War Collection. See, William C. Beeching, *Canadian Volunteers: Spain, 1936-1939* (Regina: Canadian Plains Research Center, 1989).

¹⁶ *Ibid.*

and Nazism.”¹⁷ The book’s main purpose was to record “our role and the role of Canadian boys in the struggle to preserve a democratic government and prevent the Second World War.”¹⁸ This process of researching and writing took approximately a decade and although it began at the same time as their campaign for recognition, it was only completed after their other efforts had failed.¹⁹ By publishing their own history, the VMPB sought to make their story both accessible and known; this in itself was helpful to their plight, but the main goal of these efforts was to “win government recognition.”²⁰ The purpose of their book is described in the dedication:

Canadian Volunteers: Spain 1936-1939 is dedicated to the memory of the Canadian anti-fascist volunteers who lost their lives in Spain in the first armed struggle against fascism. At least 1,448 Canadians answered the appeals for help from the Spanish democrats; 721 fell in the battles to prevent the outbreak of a world war and to preserve democracy. The eternal flame which forever flutters over the tomb of the Unknown Soldier in Ottawa also burns for them.²¹

This was a history that was meant to “explain why they had volunteered and what they had done when they went to Spain to join in the bloody civil war which overtook that country in 1936.”²² The late date of this history raises questions as to why it took so long to have this type of work published, but Beeching offers a two-fold explanation; first, that the Second World War quickly overshadowed the actions of the volunteers, and second, “the persistent stigma attached to what was, in spite

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Letter to Joseph McKeown, March 7, 1980, box 7, Spanish Civil War Collection.

¹⁹ Poggi, “Saving Memories”, 16.

²⁰ Letter to George Taylor, December 10, 1979, box 7, Spanish Civil War Collection.

²¹ Beeching, *Canadian Volunteers*, v.

²² Ibid., xxx.

of the nobility of its purpose, a losing cause.”²³ With these two factors, it is not surprising that these veterans had long been overlooked; “the painful truth is that following the triumph of fascism in Spain, the Canadian government harassed the surviving volunteers ... and when they did return to Canada, they were treated as dangerous subversives, not as farsighted heroes.”²⁴

Canadian Volunteers was the VMPB’s first step in making their history known and publicly accessible; during the Spanish Civil War, the events and movements and victories of the troops had been widely circulated in the Canadian newspapers. When the volunteers returned in 1939, their cause and what they had been fighting against had been known, but with the advent of the Second World War, the events that happened in Spain were quickly overshadowed if not forgotten. This is not to say that the volunteers who fought in Spain did not again take up their mantle to fight fascism again in the Second World War, but they did so in a much smaller number. “Ed Cecil-Smith, the former commanding officer of the Mackenzie-Papineau Battalion offered the services of surviving veterans of the fighting unit to the Canadian government,”²⁵ but his offer was rejected initially. Later in the war, Mac-Pap veterans did fight again. Some were “accepted and went through another four years of the Second World War, which many others tried to do — some were

²³ Ibid., xxxi.

²⁴ Ibid., xxxvi.

²⁵ Ibid., 200.

told they could not because they may have had communist sympathies or influences.

Some of them tried to join and were turned down.”²⁶

Whereas in Britain and the United States they utilized our people, fellows who had experience against blitzkrieg ... because that is what the Germans used in Spain, the same tactic as they used in World War II. In those countries they used veterans from Spain to train the British troops and to train the American troops. In Canada they would not do anything like that. In fact, they would not allow us in the army in some instances.²⁷

Indeed, “a few were interned by the Canadian government in 1940 under the War Measures Act because of their communist politics.”²⁸ In the Spanish Civil War Collection, held by the University of Toronto, there is a list of only twenty-five veterans of the Mac-Paps who fought in the Second World War.²⁹

²⁶ Commons Debates, Private Members’ Motion, December 15, 1980, 5768, box 9, file 14 Spanish Civil War Collection.

²⁷ House of Commons, Minutes of Proceedings and Evidence of the Standing Committee on Veteran Affairs, December 18, 1986, 1:16.

²⁸ Poggi, “Saving Memories”, 5. At least four veterans were interned during the Second World War. See, Beeching, *Canadian Volunteers*, 201; Leonard Norris, “Veterans Support for Mac Paps”, *Mac-Pap News Bulletin*, May 1983, box 25, Spanish Civil War Collection.

²⁹ List of Members that Served in WWI & WWII, box 7, Spanish Civil War Collection. This is a significant reduction in numbers compared to the approximate 1500 that went to serve in Spain, but we must take into account the number that were killed in action, went missing, and returned to Canada injured. Not only was the number of men available to fight a contributing factor to the general low numbers, but the army itself was hesitant to allow ‘communists’ to join their ranks. In the first part of the war, when Russia, was part of the Axis forces, it is reasonable enough to deny the volunteers’ requests to join, but in the latter part of the war when Russia, turned from enemy to ally, there was no legitimate reason to continue blocking them from fighting. This stigma that communism carried significantly impeded the volunteer’s ability to participate in the Second World War, which in turn impacted the number of volunteers that did eventually fight.

With their efforts overshadowed by the Second World War, and with the commencement of the Cold War, there did not seem to be a good time for the discussion of the volunteers' involvement in Spain to begin. It was in only the 1980s that the veterans of the Mackenzie-Papineau Battalion felt the time had come -- with the Cold War thawing and their numbers slowly decreasing -- for them to begin their fight for government recognition for the approximately 200 surviving members of the brigade. While publishing their own historical memories of the Spanish Civil War was an essential step to bring public attention back to the veterans' cause, the spark for this campaign began with the veterans' return trip to Spain.

As a part of the veterans' campaign for recognition, a trip was planned which saw some of the Spanish Civil War volunteers return to Spain. This trip was partially fuelled by nostalgia, but also because there was a restoration of democracy in Spain, following the death of Franco in 1975. The trip coincided with the 50th anniversary of the conflict, and was organized to include five days in Madrid, a bus tour to the various battlefields of Jarama, Brunete, Quinto, Belchite, Gandesa and the Ebro, as well as another five days spent in Barcelona, in September of 1979.³⁰ This trip was primarily for the veterans to return and see the Democratic Spain they had fought for so long ago, it was by no means limited to just the volunteers, and many were accompanied by their families.

³⁰ Veterans of the Abraham Lincoln Brigade Letter, March 3, 1986, box 7, Spanish Civil War Collection.

This trip was significant for two reasons: “the extensive media coverage provided them the opportunity to present their narrative of anti-fascism” and a reception held at the Canadian Embassy in Madrid gave them a measure of the official recognition they had long been denied.³¹ The media played an instrumental role in spurring the veterans’ quest for recognition. Prior to their trip to Spain, the veterans had been seeking a platform from which to tell their story and had begun working on their own book, but the final product at this point was still a long way off. The press latched onto the volunteers’ return to Spain and provided the volunteers with a way to have their story reach the Canadian public. Without sympathy it would be more difficult to go to the government and ask for recognition, when the last time they had been in the public eye was in 1937-1939. The publicity that the trip provided brought a renewal in public interest and a way for the veterans to further their cause. Canadian volunteer Ross Russell explained that “we have come here as a group because we are all getting older and we feel we have a responsibility to those comrades who died here.”³² This was an opportunity to frame their narrative, rather than have someone else apply labels to them. In a *Maclean’s* article, the volunteers are described as “‘premature anti-fascists’, politicized activists, many of them members of the trade-union movement and various left-wing groups ... who recognized the conflict in Spain as a prelude to a larger war.”³³ Gerry Delaney, who was a prisoner of war for most of the Spanish

³¹ Poggi, “Saving Memories” 7.

³² Eve Drobot, “Tears and Sweat: The Mac-Paps back in Spain” *Maclean’s*, October 8, 1979, item 13, Spanish Civil War Collection.

³³ *Ibid.*

Civil War, emphasized that the volunteers were “trying to stop the outbreak of the Second World War when our government was just sitting back doing nothing.”³⁴ This publicity was a key to being taken seriously by the government in their search for recognition, but was not the only benefit of the veterans’ trip to Spain.

Additionally, the volunteers were also invited to a reception at the Canadian Embassy in Madrid. This invitation is extremely important as it was issued by Emile Martel the then Chargé d’affaires in Madrid.³⁵ Ross Russell was invited to speak at the reception. He described the volunteers’ time in Spain and the reasons why they fought in the International Brigades. In a particularly poignant part, Russell reflected on the civil war and stated:

We are proud of what we did in our fight to try and preserve democracy in Spain. We are also proud that we were the first Canadians to fight against fascism in Europe. Our only regret is that untold millions had to die in the Second World War because others did not see the situation as clearly as we did, and stood by as Spain was raped. It gives us great satisfaction in returning after 40 years to find that Spaniards once more are recovering their democratic institutions. Now, when we see this it makes us realise that what we did and the sacrifices of those Canadians who died here was not in vain.³⁶

The speech was warmly received and Mr. Martel, in return referred to the volunteers as “heroes.” In speaking about the gathering, Martel said he was “most

³⁴ “Canadians recall war days on tour of Spanish front,” *The Recorder* (Kitchener-Waterloo, ON), October 10, 1979, item 13, Spanish Civil War Collection.

³⁵ Peter Krawchuk, “Spain 1979: the Mac-Paps return,” *Canadian Tribune* (Communist Party newspaper), October 15, 1979, item 13, Spanish Civil War Collection.

³⁶ Transcript of Russell’s Speech to Embassy, box 7, file 3, Spanish Civil War Collection.

touched by the occasion which gathers us here today.”³⁷ The combination of the invitation and these positive comments gave the veterans hope that recognition at an official level was not as far off as previously believed.

The goal of this campaign started with approximately 200 surviving veterans requesting ‘official’ recognition from the government in the form of an apology but also reparations by being granted veteran status. In their own formal statement made before the Special Committee in 1986, the veterans asked for:

recognition by the Government of Canada ... we are asking that the Canadian government grant us what they have now granted to the Japanese-Canadians ... they have said publicly that what we did to them was wrong ... We want them to tell us the same thing, so that our future generations, our grandchildren and great-grandchildren, will recognize that we were patriotic, we were among the first fighters against fascism. We fought the same enemy as those who fought in World War II. That is what we want; and we want the government to say so, publicly and to us.³⁸

They wanted to be “vindicated as patriots” and considered on the same standing as official Canadian veterans, which would entitle them to a government pension; however, most veterans denied this as being their primary motivation and claimed not to be concerned with financial compensation.

For a ‘new’ history to become accepted it has to persuade not only the members of the group that will ‘benefit’ from the new interpretation, but also others, according to Barkan.³⁹ This was the challenge that the veterans of the

³⁷ Peter Krawchuk, “Spain 1979: the Mac-Paps return,” *Canadian Tribune*, October 15, 1979.

³⁸ House of Commons, Minutes of Proceedings and Evidence of the Standing Committee on Veteran Affairs, December 18, 1986, 1:16.

³⁹ Barkan, *Guilt of Nations*, x.

Mackenzie-Papineau Battalion faced, as a group they were for the majority persuaded of the significance of their own history, but they had to convince the Canadian Government and veterans of other wars — especially the Second World War — that recognizing them as legitimate veterans who are deserving of status and compensation would not alter other veterans' place in the national narrative.

The framing of the veterans' involvement in the Spanish Civil War was very important to whether or not their history would be accepted and incorporated into the mainstream. In this case, it was in the volunteers' best interest to downplay the communist element of their story. This was in part due to the fact that it was their ties to communism that brought them under the scrutiny of the RCMP. Also, since of the Cold War was still ongoing when they began to retell their memories, it impeded their ability to tell their story without the stain of communism. "The International Brigades was an idea that took hold to fight against fascism. So anti-fascists from all over the world came and fought."⁴⁰ The way that the conflict was seen is also significant, if it was truly a civil war, then Canadians had no right to interfere; however, Ross Russell said during an interview with the CBC that,

It was an invasion by outsiders, primarily, with a handful of Spaniards ... the Iberian Peninsula was invaded from North Africa by Franco with the assistance of the Nazis. It became quite clear to me that if a democratically elected government such as they had in Spain could be overthrown, then it was inevitable that we were in for a Second World War.⁴¹

⁴⁰ House of Commons, Minutes of Proceedings and Evidence of the Standing Committee on Veteran Affairs, December 18, 1986, 1:15.

⁴¹ Ibid., 1:14, 1:15.

This interpretation of events does assist the veterans' claim. It is striking how quiet the Canadian government has kept this event; especially given that Canada sent the second largest percentage of its population, exceeded only by France, and given the long distance that Canadians travelled to fight in Spain, it makes their efforts all the more notable.⁴² This noticeable silence on the actions of the volunteers in combination with the "official narrative that liberal democracy and capitalism stand alone in direct opposition to right wing authoritarianism, fascism, and totalitarianism", seem at odds with one another, but considering the "continuing aversion to and fear of left-wing politics" this meant that the "official acknowledgement of the Canadian contribution has been essentially non-existent."⁴³ In the following section we will explore the government's view of the volunteers after 1980, when the discussions regarding recognition were in full swing, as well as the actions that the volunteers took in order to further their claim as 'veterans'.

The Federal View in the 1980s and 1990s

The veterans focused their efforts on official government recognition at the federal level. This push for recognition coincides with the 'memory boom' of the 1980s and 1990s.⁴⁴ It was during this boom that the subjects of history took on an

⁴² Mark Zuehlke, *The Gallant Cause: Canadians in the Spanish Civil War 1936-1939* (Vancouver: Whitecap Books, 1996), 196.

⁴³ Kevin Levangie, "From Union Station to Rideau Hall: Public Commemoration of the Canadian Contribution to the Spanish Civil War" *Canada and the Spanish Civil War*, 2014, 2, Accessed: February 12, 2019.

<https://spanishcivilwar.ca/public-commemoration>

⁴⁴ See for example, Pierre Nora, "Between Memory and History: Les Lieux de Mémoire," in "Memory and Counter-Memory," special issue, *Representations*, 26 (Spring 1989), 7-24.

active role in the ways they were portrayed and focuses on “the way individuals experience themselves as historical entities,” as Susan Crane asserts.⁴⁵ The veterans put this theory into practice by campaigning for recognition from the government by presenting their own experience of the war as they believed it should be remembered. This campaign was conducted in two parts, the first in a Private Members’ Motion in 1980 and then in front of a Standing Committee on Veterans Affairs.

In May 1980, the Veterans of the International Brigades-Mackenzie-Papineau Battalion of Canada, sent its first official written statement to the federal government.⁴⁶ This letter was sent to the Minister of Veteran Affairs, Daniel McDonald, explaining the aims of the veterans’ campaign. The letter emphasized that those who fought in Spain, were “dedicated anti-fascists” and “patriotic Canadians.”⁴⁷ Their requests were as follows: an amendment to the Foreign Enlistment Act of 1937, which would remove the sanction of criminal charges for their participation in the war in Spain, and the conferral of official veteran status on the volunteers.⁴⁸ These aims remained unchanged throughout their campaign for recognition. In the Spanish veterans’ first attempt to gain recognition in 1980, they received the backing of the New Democratic Party (NDP) caucus, which enabled

⁴⁵ Susan A. Crane, “Writing the Individual Back into Collective History,” *The American Historical Review*, 102:5 (December 1997), 1375.

⁴⁶ Poggi, “Saving Memories,” 12.

⁴⁷ Statement from veterans’ association to Minister of Veterans Affairs Daniel McDonald, May 20, 1980, box 9, file 11, Spanish Civil War Collection.

⁴⁸ Commons Debates, Private Members’ Motion, December 15, 1980, 5763, 5764, box 9, file 14, Spanish Civil War Collection.

them to bring forward a private members' motion, led by Bob Rae. The NDP had earlier that year unanimously voted to support the VMPB:

Whereas Canadians who fought against fascism in the Spanish Civil War have been deliberately forgotten by successive Canadian governments. Therefore be it resolved that the New Democratic Party demand that the veterans of the Mackenzie-Papineau Battalion of the Fifteenth International Brigade be afforded the same rights and privileges as veterans of the Canadian Armed Forces.⁴⁹

This support was encouraging, but unfortunately proved fruitless. Bob Rae claimed that those who fought in Spain "were anti-fascist before it was fashionably popular to be so" and fought for "a great and noble cause, a democratic and social democratic cause."⁵⁰ "Those Canadians who were fighting in a given theatre of war were in fact fighting for principles and ideals, the same principles and ideals for which Canadians themselves were officially engaged to fight some years later."⁵¹ He suggests that "the government of Canada made a mistake when it passed the Foreign Enlistment Act."⁵² In the veterans' view, they were "just as important, just as worthy now, finally, of official recognition as the fighting of those Canadians who sacrificed so much for us in the First World War, in the Second World War."⁵³ Rae's speech was not well received in the House of Commons. While "one can congratulate those men who went to Spain and ... one can applaud their bravery ... the indisputable fact is that they were 'soldiers of conscience,' who 'deliberately chose

⁴⁹ Len Norris, "Spain Revisited," *Mac-Paps News Bulletin*, vol. VII, no. 3, December 1979, box 25, Spanish Civil War Collection.

⁵⁰ Commons Debates, Private Members' Motion, December 15, 1980, 5763, box 9, file 14, Spanish Civil War Collection.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 5764.

⁵² *Ibid.*

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 5765.

to ignore the laws of their own country.”⁵⁴ They were not fighting in the service of Canada and therefore, were not eligible for veteran status. However, a small concession was made; as a result of the veterans’ previous letter to the Minister of Veterans Affairs, they were given “an assurance that the government would not undertake any prosecutions of members of the Mackenzie-Papineau Battalion under the Foreign Enlistment Act.”⁵⁵ This was far from the recognition they initially aimed to achieve. While this was seen as a concession on the government’s part, it still left the Foreign Enlistment Act firmly in place, it just removed the threat of prosecution, but not the label of criminal. This first petition for recognition set the groundwork for a second effort in 1986, and gave insight into the pushback they would continue to receive.

The VMPB took its cue from the failure of the first campaign and then came back in 1986, with a more rounded argument. One major difference from their first campaign was that this time the veterans were able to speak for themselves. Rather than proceeding in front of the House of Commons, as before, this meeting was conducted before the Standing Committee on Veterans Affairs. Speaking before this committee were three key individuals: Ross Russell (veteran of the Spanish Civil War), Walter Dent (veteran of both the Spanish Civil War and the Second World War) and William Stapleton (veteran of the Second World War). This was an effective tactic. Rather than allow their audience to surmise what other veteran groups may think of including the Spanish volunteers as veterans, they brought in a

⁵⁴ Ibid. 5765, 5766.

⁵⁵ Ibid., 5766.

Second World War veteran to testify to his view of the volunteers and their contributions. These proceedings took place in December of 1986, with the same purpose — to gain the recognition from the government that had “refused consistently to recognize not only us, but men like Dr. Bethune, who should be a Canadian hero.”⁵⁶ Although this was their second campaign for recognition, they did have hope; in an earlier interview with the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, Mr. Jardine, Deputy Chairman of a federal committee on Veterans’ Affairs, invited the Mac-Paps to appear before this committee to tell their story. The main obstacle was the Foreign Enlistment Act:

An act that said that anyone who went to Spain to fight for democracy and against fascism there was subject to a \$2,000 fine or two years in jail at hard labour, or both. Furthermore, our passports — mine and all of the 1,250 others who went from Canada to Spain — our passports were stamped ‘not good for travel in Spain, the Canary Islands, or any other possessions of the Spanish government.’⁵⁷

Despite knowing their actions were contrary to the law of the time in Canada, the volunteers still went and fought. On their return home, the volunteers were seen negatively by the government, “but the years and times have changed, and I think now that it is time to refresh Canadians’ memories of what these people did.”⁵⁸

Bill Stapleton, in his support for the Mackenzie-Papineau Battalion, created a list of reasons why they should be legitimized. Included in his reasoning was that:

Recognition will correct a long-standing injustice and receive broad public support for this historically popular cause. It will be perceived as an act of benevolence and compassion at home and abroad. Canada’s

⁵⁶ House of Commons, Minutes of Proceedings and Evidence of the Standing Committee on Veteran Affairs, December 18, 1986, 1:16.

⁵⁷ Ibid., 1:15-1:16.

⁵⁸ Ibid., 1:17-1:18.

respect in the international community can only be strengthened. To a country hungering for national heroes, it will be a gift of proud history to future generations.⁵⁹

On the Foreign Enlistment Act, Stapleton declared: "It is apparent that the government of the day must have questioned its merits as it was never enforced".⁶⁰ Granting recognition to the veterans, he argued, benefits both the veterans and the government. As Balkan discusses in *The Guilt of Nations*, in the 1980s and 90s political and international leverage came with recognizing one's own wrongdoings. In his final comment, Stapleton asserts that one way or another, the Mackenzie-Papineau Battalion, would be recognized and "it is better that it be this government than the next."⁶¹

One of the largest additions to the volunteers' second campaign was having endorsements from other organizations. Bill Belfontaine, a member of the Legion, wrote "in full support of the delegation before you today."⁶² He had been working with the Mac-Paps over a year in their quest for recognition. "I would hope the Committee would respect the crusade of the Canadian volunteers in their fight against fascism that became a world conflict involving all Canadians only months after the end of the Spanish Civil War."⁶³ He calls the volunteers "authentic heroes ... May I therefore beg of the Committee, after due deliberation, to recommend to the

⁵⁹ Ibid., 1:21.

⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁶¹ Ibid.

⁶² Ibid., 1:19.

⁶³ Ibid.

Government some form of recognition of these Canadian volunteers ... Having spent two and a half years in the RCAF, 1943-1945, I feel great empathy for this cause.”⁶⁴

This feeling of empathy seems to be prevalent in the case of the Mackenzie-Papineau Battalion’s search for recognition. When confronted with the volunteers’ stories of war and sacrifice, their audience is left feeling that these were men of substance. Some observers saw the International Brigades as a tool of the USSR, or even as mercenaries who fought for a wage, rather than a cause, but the majority of the Canadian public was sympathetic.⁶⁵

Widespread support was reignited by the media coverage of their return to Spain, and there were large cities throughout Canada that were willing to support the Mac-Paps’ claim to veteran status. Ottawa, Markham, Winnipeg, North York and Toronto city councils formally acknowledged their support of the Mackenzie-Papineau Battalion, and endorsed the request for “the Federal Government to afford the veteran of the Mackenzie-Papineau Battalion of the Fifteenth International Brigade the same rights and privileges as the veterans of the Canadian Armed Forces.”⁶⁶ No matter how much public sympathy there was, however they were not able to overcome the Foreign Enlistment Act.

⁶⁴ Ibid., 1:19-1:20.

⁶⁵ The volunteers were paid fifteen cents a day, less than the twenty cents a day they were promised by working at the relief camps. Ross Russell had a good paying job, and in an interview with CBC, he claimed to have been making \$35 a week, a wage that was significantly better than what he was offered by the recruiters. These facts discount the notion that the volunteers were driven by money to join in the International Brigades, as it demonstrates that there were other means of making more money available to them in their home country.

⁶⁶ Letter from North York, February 13, 1980, box 7, Spanish Civil War Collection.

Even with the removal of the threat of prosecution by the government, this did not make them in any capacity part of the official Canadian Armed Forces, and by definition, these are the only individuals eligible for 'veteran' status.

Without regard to the rights or wrongs of the actions of the Canadians who are veterans of the Spanish Civil War, they cannot be considered in the same light as Canadians who served in the wars in which Canada was involved as a nation. Consequently, there can, for example, be no thought of treating them in the same manner by making them eligible for benefits under veterans' legislation.⁶⁷

In later discussions of the Standing Committee, they asked Cliff Chadderton; from the War Amputations of Canada, about his view on the veterans. He was very pragmatic and diplomatic in his response and said: "they did not represent a group of veterans of a properly constituted military body that went forth in accordance with government policy in this country. Having said this, I do not think I can comment further."⁶⁸

So if they were not veterans under the Veteran's Act, what were their options? They had asked for the sanctions of the Foreign Enlistment Act to be removed, and although the government removed the threat of punishment, it did not make their travel to Spain legal. The only option they had was to request that the Foreign Enlistment Act not apply to them and this is an option that the government would not consider, because of the precedent it would set:

There are any number of situations very similar to the ones you found yourselves in 50 years ago. I think immediately and in the recent past of the state of Israel and young Canadians who went over there and

⁶⁷ House of Commons, The First Report to the House, December 12, 1987, 7:4.

⁶⁸ House of Commons, Minutes of Proceedings and Evidence of the Standing Committee on Veteran Affairs, March 12, 1987, 3:19.

lived in kibbutzes and fought for that foothold in their own land. They are adventurers who have become idealists. Should they have recognition in the same way and to the same extent as you are asking?⁶⁹

This idea of setting a dangerous precedent was echoed in earlier debates about recognizing the Mackenzie-Papineau Battalion:

Whether we wanted it to or not, we would be approving the actions of other people who may want to interfere in the internal affairs of other countries. Canada and most democratic countries do not interfere in the internal affairs of other countries. Mr. Speaker, the government would create an extremely dangerous precedent by recognizing officially these volunteers as Canadian soldiers. Where would we stop? How could we justify not giving benefits to all Canadians who fight in other countries for what they consider to be a just cause?⁷⁰

By eliminating the Foreign Enlistment Act, the Canadian government would lose control over who represents Canada on the international stage. This would counter the government's interests in preserving the role and prestige of the Canadian Army. Exempting the veterans of the Mackenzie-Papineau Battalion from the Foreign Enlistment Act would open the door for other groups to follow suit. For this reason, the motion to remove sanctions and grant veteran status and benefits was withdrawn by unanimous consent.⁷¹ So came the end of the veterans' fight for recognition, their goal to be recognized officially by the Canadian government was quashed.

⁶⁹ House of Commons, Minutes of Proceedings and Evidence of the Standing Committee on Veteran Affairs, December 18, 1986, 1:31.

⁷⁰ Commons Debates, Private Members' Motion, December 15, 1980, 5769, box 9, file 14, Spanish Civil War Collection.

⁷¹ House of Commons, Minutes of Proceedings and Evidence of the Standing Committee on Veteran Affairs, June 18, 1987, 6:4.

Conclusion

Comrades who fall in loneliness,
Who die for us,

I will remember you.¹
-Norman Bethune

Although the members of the Mackenzie-Papineau Battalion did not receive the recognition they had hoped to gain from the Canadian government, the battalion was eventually recognized by the public in the form of statues in five locations across Canada: Cumberland, Toronto, Vancouver, Winnipeg and Ottawa. These five sites of memory began to appear from 1989 through to 2015, after the Mac-Paps had been denied formal veteran status by the federal government. This official denial meant that Canadian veterans of the International Brigades are not included in Remembrance Day parades, the Books of Remembrance, or the Canadian Fallen Heroes Monument, and are ineligible for veterans' pensions. However, the Canadian public was of a different opinion and felt that the Mackenzie-Papineau Battalion was due recognition for their service.

The first commemoration was a plaque at Winnipeg City Hall, put up in 1989 in honour of the Manitoban volunteers in the Battalion, twenty-one of whom died and are buried in Spain.² The initiative to create this memorial came almost immediately after the Standing Committee on Veteran Affairs' decision to deny the

¹ Ted Allan and Sydney Gordon, *The Scalpel, The Sword: The Story of Doctor Norman Bethune* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1952), 144.

² "Monuments," *The Mackenzie-Papineau Battalion: Perspective on Canada and the Spanish Civil War*, Accessed: April 14, 2019.

<https://onlineacademiccommunity.uvic.ca/macpaps/monuments/#W>

Unfortunately, there was no description of the inscription available.

See Appendix 8.

"Plaque Unveiled," *Winnipeg Free Press*, October 14, 1989, box 8, Spanish Civil War Collection.

Mac-Paps veteran status. In addition to this memorial, the Manitoba provincial government heard a Private Members' Motion in 2008 to observe a moment of silence in the Mackenzie-Papineau Battalion's honour, since:

... these Canadians left their homes and families to stand against dictatorship and fascism in the name of liberty, democracy and freedom; and ... all of the members of the Mackenzie-Papineau Battalion are to be commended and remembered for their willingness to fight for freedom and democracy and protect those who were unable to protect themselves; ... these soldiers are veterans like any other and deserve our recognition and admiration. THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba recognize the heroism of the Mackenzie-Papineau Battalion in their fight for democracy and the rule of law against dictatorship and totalitarianism.³

This motion was passed unanimously. This initiative was launched under the New Democratic Party, with Bonnie Korzeniowski heading the motion. What is interesting about this motion is that not only did members of the NDP support the motion, but it crossed political lines to include members of the Progressive Conservative Party (Ralph Eichler), Liberal Party (Kevin Lamoureux and Jon Gerrard).⁴ The support for this motion was overwhelming, as the member from Lakeside, Ralph Eichler said, "I think that it's very important to recognize the fact that these people did put their lives on the line ... I think the lives lost should be

³ Legislative Assembly of Manitoba, Debates and Proceedings Official Report, May 20, 2008.

It should be noted that in this motion, there is a small error where it mentions government recognition given in 1996; this recognition was not given by the Canadian government, rather the Spanish government. In 1996, they invited all surviving veterans of the Spanish Civil War to return to Spain and presented them with honorary Spanish citizenship in recognition of their actions and bravery.

⁴ Ibid.

remembered and honoured. As a nation, we should never forget or ignore any part of our history.”⁵

There is another monument in the cemetery of Cumberland, British Columbia. This memorial came in the form of a stone with the inscription:

Internationalists who fought for Democracy. In 1936 brothers Archie and Gordon “Moon” Keenan, miners from Cumberland, volunteered to help the popularly-elected Republican government of Spain in its fight to preserve democracy against a fascist military overthrow. They joined the Mackenzie-Papineau Battalion, the Canadian section of the XV International Brigade. They fought in the battles of Jarama, Brunete, Teruel, Aragon, and the Ebro, where Gordon died on July 26, 1938 outside of Gandesa near Hill 481. Gordon was 30 when he died and was buried in Spanish soil on the battlefield where he died. ¡No Pasáran!⁶

This memorial was supported by the Friends and Veterans of the Mackenzie-Papineau Battalion but was unveiled in a joint effort with the Cumberland Museum and the Canadian Veterans Memorial Ceremony.⁷

The remaining three monuments are of a larger scale and in more prominent places, associated with either provincial or federal government sites. The statue in Victoria called “the Spirit of the Republic” is located in the park adjacent to the

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Dan Hinman-Smith, “Mac-Pap Memorial Stone unveiled at Cumberland Cemetery,” *Comox Valley Record*, June 23, 2015, Community Section, Accessed: April 20, 2019. <https://www.comoxvalleyrecord.com/community/mac-pap-memorial-stone-unveiled-at-cumberland-cemetery/>

⁷ Ibid.

This monument was unveiled June 20, 2015, and was accompanied by a colour guard. It is interesting to note that the government in power at this point in British Columbia was the Liberal Party of Canada under the leadership of Christy Clark, this would appear to fit the trend that left-wing parties on the political spectrum appear to be more sympathetic to the Mackenzie-Papineau Battalion’s cause than other more conservative or right-wing parties. See Appendix 9.

Legislative building and was constructed during an New Democratic Party majority government in 2000.⁸

The monument is comprised of three main parts: three basalt pillars, a bronze plaque, and a statue. The three columns, which bear a resemblance to the rock formations in the Ebro Sector in Spain and symbolize the rough ground of the battlefields of Spain, are arranged in a “V” shape to represent the eventual victory of the Spanish Republic.⁹

Designed by Jack Harman, the statue is of a woman and “includes a Basque cap and crow, rope sandals (alpargatas), the laurel wreath of the Spanish Republic in her right hand, and the dove of peace in her left hand.”¹⁰

The monument in Queen’s Park is the least artistic of the three larger memorials. It consists of a large boulder and a plaque located on the western side of the legislative buildings. What is significant about this plaque is that it was the project of the Historic Sites and Monuments Board (HSMB), a branch of the federal government. Although under the auspices of Parks Canada, the HSMB is still part of the federal government with the mandate, “to advise the Government of Canada, through the Minister of the Environment, on the commemoration of nationally significant aspects of Canada's history.”¹¹ Initially when the proposition was brought before the Board in November 1984, they suggested that “the Mackenzie-

⁸ “Monuments,” The Mackenzie-Papineau Battalion: Perspective on Canada and the Spanish Civil War, Accessed: April 14, 2019.

<https://onlineacademiccommunity.uvic.ca/macpaps/monuments/#W>

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Ibid. See Appendix 10.

¹¹ “Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada,” Parks Canada, Accessed: April 18, 2019. <https://www.pc.gc.ca/en/culture/clmhc-hsmbc>

Papineau Battalion is not of national historic significance.”¹² However, less than one year later, the Board rescinded its previous decision and determined that the Mac-Paps were of national historic significance “and should be commemorated by means of a plaque at Union Station in Toronto.”¹³ This decision that the Mac-Paps were worthy of commemoration came one year prior to Veterans Affairs deciding that the Spanish volunteers were not acting in Canada’s interests, therefore making them ineligible for official veteran status, which is at odds with the HSMB decision. Unfortunately because of a lack of documentation from the Historic Sites and Monuments Board, the reasoning for their 1985 decision when they found in favour of commemorating the veterans, is not clear. The text that the Board approved reads as follows:

The ‘Mac-Paps’ were a unit of the International Brigades, a volunteer force recruited world-wide to oppose the fascist forces bent on overthrowing the government of Spain. Formed in Spain in 1937, the battalion was named for the leaders of the 1837 rebellions in Upper and Lower Canada. Despite their government’s opposition, more than 1,500 Canadians volunteered to fight with the Republican forces in the Spanish Civil War. They fought courageously for their ideals, suffering heavy losses in major battles. About half survived to return home in 1939.¹⁴

The location of this plaque did change from the initial recommendation of Union Station to being on the grounds of Queen’s Park, similar to the location of the Victoria monument. In a letter sent to one of the Spanish veterans, William Kardash, of the Historic Sites and Monuments Board, said that “although Union Station is no longer being considered as the location for the Board plaque, the Ontario Region

¹² “Excerpt from Minutes,” Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Ibid.

Office of the Canadian Parks Service is investigating alternate sites in Toronto.”¹⁵

This change of venue was partially due to difficulty finding an appropriate plaque location, but was solved in 1994 when “the Speaker of the Ontario Legislature proposed that the plaque be erected at Queen’s Park.”¹⁶

The last and final monument that should be mentioned is the one located in Ottawa, the national capital. The monument itself has two parts: first is the twelve meter-long concrete wall with the names of all those who volunteered in Spain inscribed onto metal plaques, and secondly there is the vertical metal sheet with the cut out of a man raising his fist towards a Spanish sun.¹⁷ The Friends of the Mackenzie-Papineau Battalion were responsible for raising funds for this monument as well as selecting the design by artist and architect Oryst Sawchuk.¹⁸ The Friends of the Mackenzie-Papineau Battalion also worked collaboratively with

¹⁵ Letter from Historic Sites and Monuments Board, February 17, 1989, box 8, Spanish Civil War Collection.

¹⁶ Ibid. See Appendix 11.

The ten year gap between the date of designation and the actual unveiling is apparently something that is rather common with the HSMB. As explained by one of the Program Officers of Heritage Designations, Parks Canada has a backlog of designation that remain without a plaque, mostly due to time and staff resources available. As was the case with the plaque for the Mackenzie-Papineau Battalion, there is also sometimes problems finding the right location to host the plaque, either with the property owner or logistics of where the proposed plaque is placed (ie. lack of space, not enough public viewing, etc.). It is for this reason that the time-gap of 10 years is not necessarily a concern in this case and was not mentioned in this paper.

¹⁷ See Appendix 12.

¹⁸ “Monuments,” The Mackenzie-Papineau Battalion: Perspective on Canada and the Spanish Civil War, Accessed: April 14, 2019.
<https://onlineacademiccommunity.uvic.ca/macpaps/monuments/#W>

the National Capital Commission to determine a location for the monument,¹⁹ on Green Island opposite Rideau Falls on the Rideau River. The monument is approximately two kilometres from Parliament Hill, making it more removed than either the monument in Toronto or the one in Victoria, which are closer to the seat of government.²⁰ Unlike the two other monuments, the Ottawa statue does not benefit from close proximity to a legislative building, which lends its credibility and influence to the monument simply due to its proximity.

What makes this monument particularly interesting, is that the Governor General, Adrienne Clarkson, was present and spoke at the unveiling.²¹ This statue was inaugurated in October 2001, when the Liberal Party was in power, and Jean Chrétien was Prime Minister. To have a government official, especially the Governor General, speak at an event would suggest at the very least some level of federal acceptance and support of the Mackenzie-Papineau Battalion and their actions. However, her words were very carefully chosen:

I understand that, today, of that audacious and committed band, there are fewer than a dozen left. It is fitting that we recognize, 65 years later, the historic moment for which these men and women went to fight in a foreign war, a war which was not their own, a war in which Canada was not involved as a nation ... the Mac-Paps decided that this cause was important enough for them to face the anger of their own government; to face the consternation of many of their fellow citizens at that time and for decades to come; and to face a life afterwards in

¹⁹ "Speech on the Occasion of the Unveiling of the Mackenzie-Papineau Battalion Monument," Governor General of Canada, October 21, 2001, Accessed: April 15, 2019.

<https://archive.gg.ca/media/doc.asp?lang=e&DocID=1331>

²⁰ "Canadian vets of the Spanish Civil War get Ottawa monument," CBC Digital Archives, Accessed: April 15, 2019. <https://www.cbc.ca/archives/entry/canadian-vets-of-the-spanish-civil-war-get-ottawa-monument>

²¹ Ibid.

which very few people would take the least interest in the kind of idealism that had sent them to Spain in the first place.²²

She makes no direct mention of the government or its denial of recognition in the past. It is interesting to note that she also makes no mention of communism, which appeared to be one of the sticking points in previous discussions of government recognition, and instead she adopts the same terminology that the veterans used in describing themselves as fighting fascism and defending democracy.²³ “Today, we are giving the Mackenzie-Papineau Battalion a lasting memorial – here, where it should be, in their own land.”²⁴

These memorials located across the country are the only formal acknowledgement from Canadians that these veterans risked their lives for a cause that they believed in; that they left their homes, family, friends and country to fight in Spain, on the side of the Spanish democracy against the forces of fascism. These veterans are excluded from Remembrance Day proceedings and other national military events. Rather, these monuments and memorials are the only sites of memory that recognize the Canadians who fought in the Spanish Civil War.

²² “Speech on the Occasion of the Unveiling of the Mackenzie-Papineau Battalion Monument,” Governor General of Canada, October 21, 2001, Accessed: April 15, 2019.

<https://archive.gg.ca/media/doc.asp?lang=e&DocID=1331>

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Ibid.

The Mackenzie-Papineau Battalion had a difficult history. Almost from the beginning of recruitment efforts in Canada, the volunteers and recruiters were under surveillance largely due to the involvement of the Communist Party in recruiting volunteers for the International Brigades. After reaching Spain and fighting with the International Brigades for approximately a year, the volunteers were recalled from the frontlines and told to return home in September 1938 after it became clear that the Republic was losing, a task that was difficult not only because of their passports being stamped "not valid for Spain."²⁵ This stamp was instituted after the Foreign Enlistment Act was passed in 1937, as a governmental precaution to remain neutral to the fighting and not anger other countries that had signed the Non-Intervention Agreement. Upon their return, the volunteers' participation in Spain brought them under increased suspicion of being communist and resulted not only in surveillance shortly after their return, but well into the 1980s, almost fifty years after the end of the conflict. They were believed to be a threat, due to their supposedly revolutionary ideology and the fact that they now had military training, bolstering the RCMP's fear of an armed uprising.

Upon their return home, the veterans' accomplishments were quickly overshadowed with the start of the Second World War -- in which volunteers again fought only a few short months after the end of the Spanish Civil War. During the Cold War, a time when the fear of communism was high, and as the volunteers of the Spanish Civil War were painted as communists by the government due in large part

²⁵ Petrou, *Renegades*, 102.

to the efforts of the RCMP, there was no opportunity for these veterans to have their story told publicly in order to gain recognition. With the end of the Cold War, however, there was a new openness and frankness in terms of histories being recognized, which in turn offered the veterans of the International Brigades an opportunity to have their story heard, and maybe accepted. In their search for recognition, the largest obstacle that the volunteers faced was the Foreign Enlistment Act, a piece of legislation that was politically motivated to not only appease other nations that had signed the Non-Intervention Act, but to also mitigate the French-English divide within Canada. Thus began the dynamic that would plague the volunteers' fight for government recognition – the problem of the politicization of history.

In these discussions of recognition both in the House of Commons and the Standing Committee on Veterans Affairs, political affiliation played a role in who was willing to support the volunteers of the Spanish Civil War. This can be seen through the backing of New Democratic Party leader Bob Rae in the veterans' first attempt at recognition in 1980, which manifested itself in the form of a Private Members' Motion. This motion was unanimously supported by the party in an effort to garner the Spanish Civil War veterans a modicum of recognition. However, this motion and the one brought before the Standing Committee on Veterans Affairs in 1986 were both dismissed; the 1980 motion under the Liberal government of Pierre Trudeau, and the 1986 one under Conservative Brian Mulroney. In both attempts at recognition, the problem was that despite the noble or valiant reason the volunteers went to Spain, they went against the express direction of the government, thereby

disqualifying them from official veteran status as they did not represent Canada in any official capacity.

Contrary to the federal government's decision to not consider the volunteers who participated in the Spanish Civil War, the Manitoba Legislative Assembly supported including the Mackenzie-Papineau Battalion in their moment of silence in honour of Canadian soldiers and heroes. This motion was brought forward by an NDP member and it received support across party-lines including Liberal and Conservative representatives. It should be noted that, while unanimously supported, the party in power in Manitoba at the time was NDP, suggesting that party politics may have had an impact on this decision to include the Mackenzie-Papineau Battalion in their moment of silence. It should be noted, however, that they did not extend their recognition of the Mac-Paps beyond that proposed moment of silence.

While the Mackenzie-Papineau Battalion's attempts failed to achieve recognition at the government level, the public perception of these volunteers differed greatly from the official view of the government. This difference in perception is present from the outbreak of the conflict in Spain, to the volunteers' return to Canada, and is manifest when looking at the issue of commemoration. The dichotomy of views can be explained by looking at the two groups' sources of information. The government's main source of information was the RCMP, which had a vested interest in keeping discussion of the threat of communism at the forefront, as maintaining the security of Canada was their *raison d'être* and

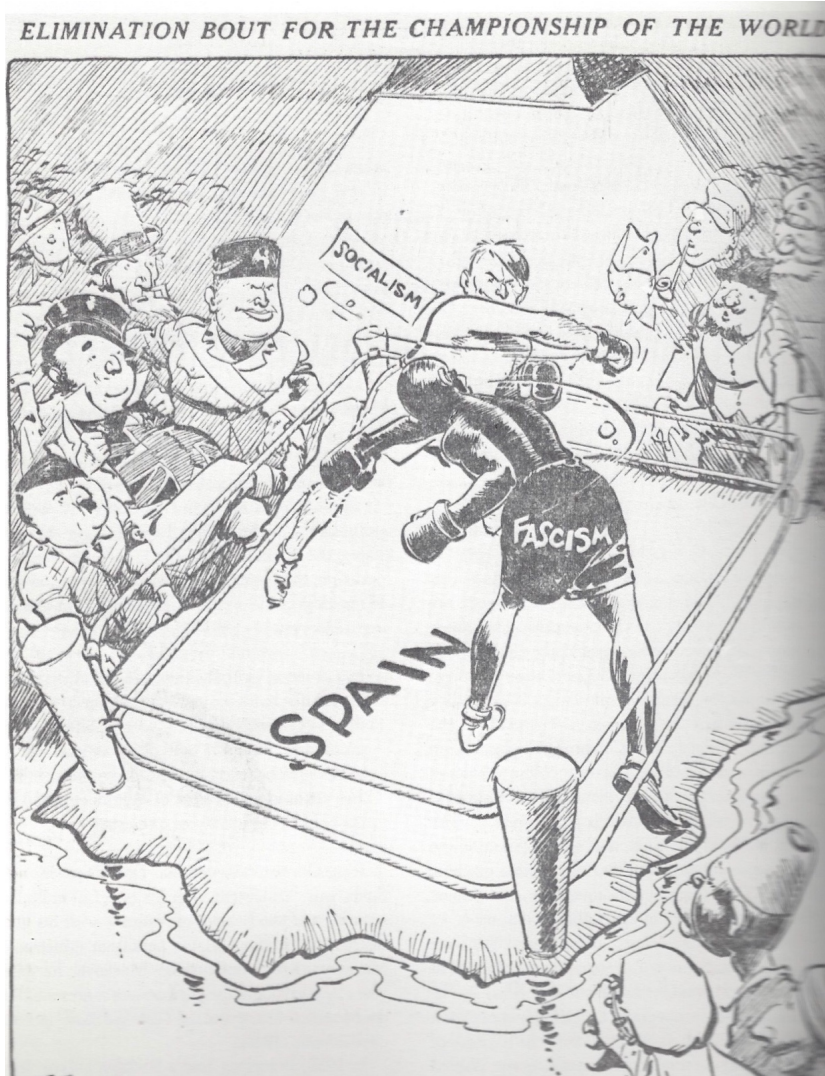
communism was both a potential threat and a justification for the RCMP's existence and power. The public's view, on the other hand, was informed largely by the newspapers that were, generally speaking and with the exception of Québec, sympathetic to the cause of the Spanish Republic and thereby of the International Brigades who were fighting on its behalf. The government's view of the Spanish volunteers influenced the Foreign Enlistment Act, which made fighting in the Spanish Civil War criminal; surveillance conducted on veterans after their return and for over fifty years; and again when the government denied them veteran status and any form of formal recognition. The public took a less drastic view of these volunteers, and upon their return, they received a hero's welcome. Where the trains stopped, such as in Montreal, Timmins, Toronto, and further west, the returning Mac-Paps were greeted by crowds of friends and family. The public was also more sympathetic of the volunteers' search for recognition. This recognition did not take the form that the veterans were seeking by way of a formal declaratory statement from the government, instead, support was shown through donations made for the various statues, monuments, and memorials located throughout Canada.

The historiography of the Spanish Civil War and of the individual battalions has largely revolved around the military campaigns, the politics of the International Brigades, and the social class of the volunteers. Memory, and how it has been framed with regard to the Mac-Paps, remains to be fully explored in the scholarship. By focusing not on their experiences as soldiers, but on the events and their reception after the volunteers' return, we can see how the memory of the Mackenzie-Papineau Battalion was shaped by the Foreign Enlistment Act, the

actions and initiatives of the RCMP, and the subsequent denial of veteran status by the federal government.

Appendices

Appendix 1



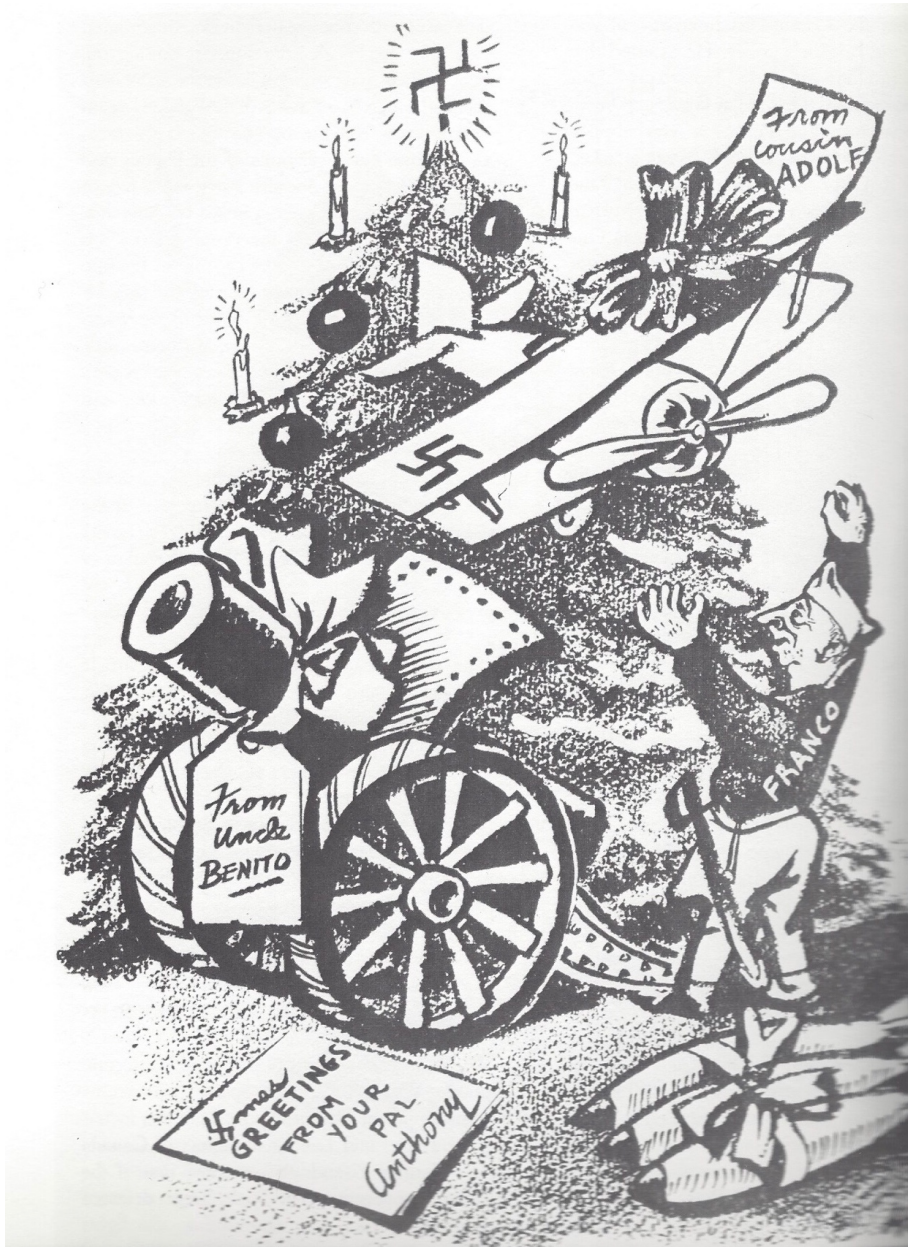
Elimination Bout for the Championship of the World – from Mary Biggar Peck, *Red Moon Over Spain: Canadian Media Reaction to the Spanish Civil War 1936-1939*, Ottawa: Steel Rail Publishing, 1988.

Appendix 2



Photo of Prime Minister Mackenzie-King visiting Berlin, Germany. *New Frontier*, January 1937.

Appendix 3



A Christmas Gift for Francisco Franco – from Mary Biggar Peck, *Red Moon Over Spain: Canadian Media Reaction to the Spanish Civil War 1936-1939*, Ottawa: Steel Rail Publishing, 1988.

1 GEORGE VI.

CHAP. 32.

An Act respecting Foreign Enlistment.

[Assented to 10th April, 1937.]

HIS Majesty, by and with the advice and consent of the Senate and House of Commons of Canada, enacts as follows:—

1. This Act may be cited as *The Foreign Enlistment Act*, Short title. 1937.

2. In this Act, and in any regulation or order made hereunder, unless the context otherwise requires:—

- (a) "Within Canada" includes Canadian waters as defined for the purposes of the *Customs Act*; "Within Canada". R.S. c. 42.
- (b) "Armed forces" includes military, naval and air forces or services, combatant or non-combatant, but shall not include surgical, medical, nursing and other services engaged solely in humanitarian work and which are under the control or supervision of the Canadian Red Cross or other recognized Canadian humanitarian society; "Armed forces".
- (c) "Conveyance" includes ships, vessels, aircraft, trains, and motor and other vehicles; "Conveyance".
- (d) "Illegally enlisted person" means a person who has accepted or agreed to accept any commission or engagement, or who is about to quit Canada with intent to accept any commission or engagement, or who has been induced to go on board a conveyance under a misapprehension or false representation of the service in which such person is to be engaged with the intention or in order that such person may accept or agree to accept any commission or engagement contrary to the provisions of this Act; "Illegally enlisted person".
- (e) "Equips" in relation to a ship, includes the furnishing of anything which is used for the purpose of fitting "Equips".

or adapting the ship for the sea, or for naval service, and all words relating to equipment shall be construed accordingly;

"Foreign State".

(f) "Foreign State" includes any foreign prince, colony, province or part of any province or people, or any person or persons exercising or assuming to exercise the powers of government in or over any foreign country, colony, province, or part of any province or people.

Offence to enlist with a foreign state at war with a friendly state.

3. If any person, being a Canadian National, within or without Canada, voluntarily accepts or agrees to accept any commission or engagement in the armed forces of any foreign state at war with any friendly foreign state, or, whether a Canadian National or not, within Canada, induces any other person to accept or agree to accept any commission or engagement in any such armed forces, such persons shall be guilty of an offence under this Act.

Offers inducement.

Offence to quit or intend to quit Canada to enlist.

4. If any person, being a Canadian National, quits or goes on board any conveyance with a view of quitting Canada with intent to accept any commission or engagement in the armed forces of any foreign state at war with any friendly foreign state, or, whether a Canadian National or not, within Canada, induces any other person to quit or go on board any conveyance with a view of quitting Canada, with a like intent, such person shall be guilty of an offence under this Act.

Offers inducement.

Offence to induce a person to enlist and quit Canada by misrepresentation.

5. If any person induces any other person to quit Canada, or to go on board any conveyance within Canada under a misrepresentation or false representation of the service in which such person is to be engaged, with the intent or in order that such person may accept or agree to accept any commission or engagement in the armed forces of any foreign state at war with a friendly state, such person shall be guilty of an offence under this Act.

Owner of conveyance may be guilty of an offence.

6. (1) If the person having the control or direction of, or being the owner of any conveyance, knowingly either takes on board or engages to take on board or has on board such conveyance, within Canada, any illegally enlisted person, the person having such control or direction of, or being the owner of any such conveyance, shall be guilty of an offence under this Act.

Detaining conveyance.

(2) Such conveyance shall be detained until the trial or conviction of such person or owner and until all fines or penalties imposed on such person or owner have been paid or security approved by the Court having jurisdiction in the matter has been given for the payment thereof.

7. If any person, within Canada, does any of the following acts, that is to say, Offences.

(a) builds or agrees to build or causes to be built, any ship with intent or knowledge, or having reasonable cause to believe that the same shall or will be employed in or by the armed forces of any foreign state at war with any friendly state; or Builds ship.

(b) issues or delivers any commission for any ship with intent or knowledge or having reasonable cause to believe that the same shall or will be employed in or by the armed forces of any foreign state at war with any friendly state; or Commissions ship.

(c) equips any ship with intent or knowledge or having reasonable cause to believe that the same shall or will be employed in or by the armed forces of any foreign state at war with any friendly state; or Equips ship.

(d) despatches or causes or allows to be despatched, any ship, with intent or knowledge or having reasonable cause to believe that the same shall or will be employed in or by the armed forces of any foreign state at war with any friendly state; Despatches ships.

such person shall be guilty of an offence under this Act.

Provided that a person building, causing to be built, or equipping a ship in any of the cases aforesaid, in pursuance of a contract made before the commencement of such war as aforesaid, shall not be deemed to have committed an offence under this Act, if, forthwith, upon a proclamation of neutrality or any other proclamation notifying or bringing into operation the provisions of this Act, he gives notice to the Secretary of State for External Affairs that he is so building, causing to be built, or equipping, such ship, and furnishes such particulars of the contract and of any matters relating to or done, or to be done under the contract, as may be required by the Secretary of State for External Affairs, and, if he give such security and takes and permits to be taken such other measures, if any, as the Secretary of State for External Affairs may prescribe for insuring that such ship shall not be despatched, delivered or removed, or otherwise dealt with, without the permission in writing of the Secretary of State for External Affairs, until the termination of such war as aforesaid. Proviso.

8. When any ship is built by order of or on behalf of any foreign state, when at war with a friendly state, or is delivered to or to the order of such foreign state, or to any person who to the knowledge of the person building is an agent of such foreign state, or is paid for by such foreign state or such agent, and is employed in or by the armed forces of such foreign state, such ship shall, until the contrary is proved, be deemed to have been built with a view Ships employed by armed forces of foreign state deemed to have been built for such purpose.

to being so employed, and the burden shall lie on the builder of such ship of proving that he did not know that the ship was intended to be so employed in or by the armed forces of such foreign state.

Arming or equipping ships for foreign state at war.

9. If any person within Canada, by any addition to or substitution in the armament or equipment, increases or augments, or procures to be increased or augmented, or is knowingly concerned in increasing or augmenting the war-like force of any ship, which at the time of its being within Canada was a ship in or of the armed forces of any foreign state at war with any friendly state, such person shall be guilty of an offence under this Act.

Offence.

Outfitting expedition against friendly state.
Offence.

10. If any person, within Canada, prepares or fits out any military, naval or air expedition, to proceed against the dominions of any friendly state, such person shall be guilty of an offence against this Act.

Recruiting.

11. If any person, within Canada, recruits or otherwise induces any person or body of persons to enlist or to accept any commission or engagement in the armed forces of any foreign state or other armed forces operating in such state, such person shall be guilty of an offence under this Act: Provided, however, that the provisions of this section shall not apply to the action of foreign consular or diplomatic officers or agents in enlisting persons who are nationals of the countries which they represent, and who are not Canadian Nationals, in conformity with the regulations of the Governor in Council.

Offence.

Proviso.
Not applicable to consular or diplomatic officers.

Prize of war.

12. If any ship, goods, or merchandise, captured as prize of war within Canada in violation of Canadian neutrality, or captured by any ship which may have been built, equipped, commissioned or despatched, or the force of which may have been augmented, contrary to the provisions of this Act, are brought within Canada by the captor, or by any agent of the captor, or by any person having come into possession thereof with a knowledge that the same was prize of war so captured as aforesaid, it shall be lawful for the original owner of such prize or his agent, or for any person authorized in that behalf by the government of the Foreign State to which such owner belongs, or in which the ship captured as aforesaid may have been duly registered, to make application to the Exchequer Court of Canada for seizure and detention of such prize, and the Court shall, on due proof of the facts, order such prize to be restored.

Application to Court for restoration of prize.

Orders in
Council.
Regulations.

19. (1) The Governor in Council may, from time to time, by order or regulation, provide for any or all of the following matters:—

- (a) the application of the provisions of this Act, with necessary modifications, to any case in which there is a state of armed conflict, civil or otherwise, either within a foreign country or between foreign countries;
- (b) the seizure, detention and disposition of conveyances, goods and merchandise;
- (c) the requirement of the consent of an authority or authorities to prosecutions, seizures, detentions and forfeiture proceedings;
- (d) the designation of officers or authorities who may execute any of the provisions of this Act;
- (e) the issue, restriction, cancellation and impounding of passports, whether within Canada or elsewhere, to the extent to which such action is deemed by him to be necessary or expedient for carrying out the general purposes of this Act.

Orders and
regulations
to be
published in
Gazette.

(2) Such orders and regulations shall be published in the *Canada Gazette*, and shall take effect from the date of such publication or from the date specified for such purpose in such order or regulation, and shall have the same force and effect as if enacted herein.

Repeal.

20. The Act of the Parliament of the United Kingdom, chapter ninety of the Statutes of 1870 (33 & 34 Victoria) the short title of which is The Foreign Enlistment Act 1870, is hereby repealed in so far as it is part of the law of Canada.

Appendix 5



Timmins crowd greet fourteen volunteers returning from Spain at the local train station — *Timmins Daily Press*, February 6, 1939.

Appendix 6



Captain Cecil-Smith addresses crowd at Union Station following the arrival of the Mac-Paps in Toronto, February 1939 — *National Archives of Canada C-67441*.

Appendix 7



Montreal crowd — a crowd of family and friends wait in Montreal Station to greet the returning volunteers, February 1939 — *National Archives of Canada C-67452.*

Appendix 8



Winnipeg memorial unveiled — *Winnipeg Free Press*, October 1989.

Appendix 9



Cumberland memorial —
<https://onlineacademiccommunity.uvic.ca/macpaps/monuments/#W>

Appendix 10



Victoria memorial —
<https://onlineacademiccommunity.uvic.ca/macpaps/monuments/#W>

Appendix 11



Toronto memorial —
<https://onlineacademiccommunity.uvic.ca/macpaps/monuments/#W>

Appendix 12



Ottawa monument —
<https://onlineacademiccommunity.uvic.ca/macpaps/monuments/#W>

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