

## SUMMARY

### **MEMBERS OF THE INTERNATIONAL BRIGADES, CZECHOSLOVAKIA AND THE SPANISH CIVIL WAR**

#### **The unknown chapters from the history of Czechoslovak participation in the Spanish Civil War 1936–1939**

The presented publication was created as a shared work by a team of authors of various orientations (not solely historians). The authors applied an “indirect attitude”: except for the focus on chronologically and thematically sharply defined segments of activities of Czechoslovak volunteers in the International Brigades in 1936–1939, they put stress particularly on the context of a broader character, both in a chronological and thematic sense.

From the point of view of segmentation, the text of the book is divided into two main parts. The first one focuses on the broader context of world and Czechoslovak politics, the second one on the problems of the destinies of the Czechoslovak voluntary members of the International Brigades. In the introductory chapter the theme of the civil war itself is sketched as well as its international response and importance. The second chapter is a presentation and analysis of directions and streams of contemporary history that should provide a fundamental view of the different opinions and different assumption of the topic on the part of the most important Spanish and world-renowned researchers. The third chapter focuses on the essential element of the Spanish Civil War – international intervention. On the example of the Soviet Union and Comintern this text foreshadows the circumstances and reasons why a large number of states including powers – even sometimes territorially very distant powers – participated in the conflict. The study, which was processed particularly on the basis of Russian materials, provides an interesting analysis of Soviet perception of the whole matter, both from the point of view of international relations of the Soviet state, the connection with the Comintern’s course of action and the progress and tactics directly in Spain. The approaches and attitudes of the Czechoslovak state within international relations are summarized in the following chapter where

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its manifestations and the background are presented, including the description of concrete consequences of the fundamentally characteristic changes of Czechoslovak foreign policy after the Munich Agreement and in the period of the so-called Second Republic. Through this topic the chapter represents a transition from the international context of the Spanish Civil War to a narrower perspective of the Czechoslovak volunteers.

The next chapters are dedicated directly to the Czechoslovak members of the International Brigades. Here the authors abstracted from the descriptions of the volunteers' involvement on fronts of the Spanish Civil War and instead of it they point at the topics that have only been sporadically mentioned so far. After the introductory musing about the destinies and attitudes of Czechoslovak members of the International Brigades over decades, the authors also place a chapter which attracts attention to the problems of recruitment of the volunteers and their journey to Spain, which are necessarily considered to be an immediate part of their combat engagement, if only due to the problems and persecution the volunteers had to face. The next chapter sketches the destinies of Czechoslovak volunteers in the period of the Second World War. The connection of the Spanish Civil War with the following global conflict is often presented because for the former volunteers the new war was an opportunity how to continue the armed fight they began on the Spanish front. For the first time the chapter presents the total number of members of the International Brigades who reported for or who directly fought in Czechoslovak exile units in the wartime years of 1939–1945 and this way it sketches their significance within the army-in-exile. The former volunteers in Spain were of huge significance in Czechoslovakia in the post-war peace years when they turned their rich experience to the victory of the ideas of social justice, for which they initially risked their lives in Spain. Several reversals of their positions that resulted in many personal tragedies are presented in the following chapter in a summary.

The text part of the publication concludes with a treatise on the reflection of the Spanish Civil War in Czech (Czechoslovak) literature on translation. Similar to the other parts of the book, this chapter shall also – apart from a very useful concrete overview – present another particularly important area, which is culture in its broadest form. A thematic supplement to this chapter is a pictorial

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appendix in the form of a selection of posters from those times from the collections of the National Archives in Prague. The posters exemplify how support for the Republican government and the effort to contribute to the fight for its ideals were also projected into the area of applied arts.

As another supplement the reproduction of the statistics of the participation of Czechoslovak members of the International Brigades in the Spanish Civil War was included in the same form as it was processed in 1940 in Moscow. The material, whose copies became part of archive collections of the Institute of History of the Communist Party and the Institute of Marxism-Leninism, has been selectively quoted in many works. The entire publication will provide direct access to these sources of great interest whose informative value is, in spite of all limitations and incompleteness, still important.

Except for the main goal, which is to recall the problems and questions that have remained unexplored up until now, the presented publication also wants to show that the topic of the Spanish Civil War and the Czechoslovak volunteers is still alive even after eighty years.

*přeložil Jan Feit a Brieanne Traube*