

## **Hungarian Volunteers from Canada in the Spanish Civil War, 1936-39**

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**On May 25, 1998**, the Canadian House of Commons voted on a motion to give "...to the members of the Mackenzie-Papineau Battalion and other Canadians who fought with Spanish Republican forces in the Spanish Civil War between 1936 and 1939, the status of veterans under the federal legislation and making them eligible for veterans' pensions and benefits."<sup>1</sup> This motion was defeated but it evoked some strong reactions in the House of Commons and in the local press either supporting or condemning this motion.<sup>2</sup> These reactions provide a hint of the emotions which ruled the political arena in the 1930's especially when the Spanish Civil War was discussed.

The Spanish Civil War of 1936-39, between the Popular Front Republican Government and the insurgent forces led by General Francisco Franco, was interpreted then, and subsequently, as an epic struggle between the forces of democracy and fascism, progress and reaction, good and evil. One of the enduring legends and myths of this war was the crucial role played by the International Brigades in defending the Popular Front Republican Government. There were over fourteen hundred volunteers from Canada, including a large number from the various Canadian ethnocultural groups who fought in the ranks of the Mackenzie-Papineau Battalion and in several other units of the International Brigades.<sup>3</sup> Canadian participation in the Spanish Civil War has attracted only limited attention from Canadian historians and the specific Hungarian Canadian story remains virtually unknown.<sup>4</sup>

There are several reasons for this lack of historical information. All records of the Mackenzie-Papineau Battalion and the International Brigades disappeared with the defeat of the Republican Government in early 1939. Historical information that was subsequently available could be found in published popular histories, memoirs and autobiographies, obituaries, archival collections of Spanish Civil War veterans' associations and lists of volunteers.<sup>5</sup> It was only in 1994 that the National Archives of Canada acquired microfilm reels of most of the Canadian portion of the International Brigades archives in Moscow. Also,

files from the Canadian Security and Intelligence Service Records on the Canadian volunteers in the International Brigades were made available in recent years to researchers at the National Archives of Canada.<sup>6</sup> As a result, there are now additional sources from which to create a profile of the Canadians in Spain; however, biographical information on all the Canadian volunteers continues to be sparse. In the Moscow files, there are questionnaires completed in 1937 and 1938 by many of the Canadian volunteers including their political evaluations. Through the examination of these questionnaires, it is possible to identify some of the Hungarian volunteers. The available biographical information differs for each volunteer and nothing in fact is known about many of them except their names and that they served in Spain. However, enough data exists among all these sources to draw a tentative profile of the Hungarian volunteers from Canada in the International Brigades.

The Spanish Civil War began on July 18, 1936 with the revolt of the military leadership in Spanish Morocco. The military, supported by an alliance of landowners, monarchists and the Roman Catholic Church hierarchy, opposed the growing socialist and anti-clerical tendencies of the Popular Front Republican Government. With most of the army in revolt, the Republican Government did not have any significant armed forces for its own defence.

Almost immediately, the insurgents were able to obtain military aid from Nazi Germany in the form of military aircraft. Later, the insurgents received many tens of thousands of 'volunteers' from Fascist Italy who were in fact trained soldiers. The Republican Government, more specifically the various political parties and movements including the Communist Party of Spain, began to organize militias from among their own followers to defend the government. These militias also included the first foreign volunteers and German and French units were soon established.

The Communist Party of Spain (CPS) believed that a large international expedition would generate widespread headlines and support for the Republican cause. The CPS began to organize the foreign volunteers and, through the Communist International in Moscow, a worldwide recruiting network was created.<sup>7</sup> In Canada, reports on the Spanish Civil War appeared in the popular press and the involvement of international volunteers was reported in almost every issue of the pro-communist newspapers including the *Daily Clarion*. In the Hungarian left-wing community, news of events from Spain was published in the *Kanadai Magyar Munkás* [Canadian Hungarian Worker]. The first large group of international volunteers arrived in Spain in October and the first organized group of volunteers from North America arrived in December, 1936. Perhaps the earliest major battle where the International Brigades played a significant role was the defence of Madrid.<sup>8</sup> During the winter of 1936-37, the volunteers were organized into military units according to language groups and national origin. In February, 1937, the Abraham Lincoln Battalion was organized and in May, the George Washington Battalion was formed to include the North American volunteers.

By April, 1937, there were sufficient Canadian volunteers in American and other units and they submitted a formal petition to the headquarters of the International Brigades requesting to form their own unit. The name selected was Mackenzie-Papineau, in recognition of the leaders of the 1837 Rebellions in Upper and Lower Canada. By the time the Mackenzie-Papineau Battalion of the 15th International Brigade was formally organized on July 1, 1937, over five hundred Canadians had volunteered for Spain. Although the Battalion was nominally Canadian, it was really an international unit composed largely of Americans and other English-speaking volunteers including a large percentage of Spanish soldiers. Canadians also served in medical corps, armour and artillery units and in other American and European units.

On May 20, 1937, an association called the Friends of the Mackenzie-Papineau Battalion was established in Canada to support the volunteers in Spain. Most Canadian cities also had Spanish Aid Committees which corresponded with the volunteers overseas, sent telegrams to Ottawa in an attempt to influence Canadian government policy towards Spain, organized speaking tours and Spanish Aid Weeks, raised funds for medical supplies and ambulances, collected parcels and produced articles for publication in the popular press. Members of the Canadian left-wing movement also wrote letters to Canadian politicians in support of the Mackenzie-Papineau Battalion and the Spanish Republican cause.<sup>9</sup>

In the final report submitted in March, 1939 by the Friends of the Mackenzie-Papineau Battalion Committee, the number of Canadian volunteers was given as 1,239. More recently, a "Mac-Pap" veteran, Lee Burke, compiled a list with 1,438 names. In the research for the book, *Canadian Volunteers*, the number was estimated at 1,448 Canadians. Among this number, names of 86 Hungarian volunteers from Canada were identified.<sup>10</sup>

The Canadian federal government followed the British foreign policy of non-intervention in the Spanish conflict. In reaction to this volunteer movement, the Canadian government indicated in January, 1937, that the Imperial Foreign Enlistment Act would be revised to control enlistment in Canada for military service in foreign countries. Recruiting for Spain, which was largely a low-profile enterprise, went underground. In western Canada, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) became suspicious when surprisingly large numbers of young men applied for passports for travel to Europe.<sup>11</sup> Applications for passports were delayed until investigations into the motives of the applicants could be completed. However, individuals who were not British subjects could apply at the consulates of their countries of origin for visas allegedly to return to Europe without any investigation.<sup>12</sup> According to available information, many of the Hungarian volunteers chose this route to leave for Europe. In April, a new Foreign Enlistment Act was adopted which made it a criminal offense for any Canadian to enlist in the armed forces of any foreign state at war with any friendly state. On July 31, 1937 the act was applied to the enlistment by Canadians on any side in Spain.<sup>13</sup> Since it was illegal to volunteer for Spain, individ-

uals frequently disguised their identity under aliases, and recruitment in Canada was done in relative secrecy.

When examining the motivations of the Canadian volunteers to leave for Spain, it is essential to recognize the impact of the Depression on their personal and collective experiences. Beginning in 1929-30, the collapse of the Canadian economy into chaos obliged many to travel across Canada and search for what little work was available. They had to compete with Canadian-born labourers for heavy physical work on the industrial frontiers which in previous years was left to recent immigrants. Some had worked in the relief camps the federal government established for the unemployed or took part in the On-to-Ottawa Trek in 1935 that led to confrontations with police and a number of casualties.

The typical volunteer was politically radicalized by his experiences during the Depression and gravitated to left-wing organizations. In the Hungarian community, organizers from the Communist Party of the United States were sent to industrial centres in Canada to recruit members.<sup>14</sup> In many cases, it was only a question of time before they joined the Communist Party of Canada (CPC). Throughout the 1930s, left-wing associations allied with the CPC made a concerted effort to organize unemployed workers, especially recent immigrants.<sup>15</sup> Of the Hungarian volunteers whose political affiliations are known, 26 belonged to the Communist Party of Canada. According to the Moscow records, the figure for all Canadian volunteers may be as high as 75%.

The movement to recruit volunteers for Spain was administered by the Communist Party of Canada and there was a search for dedicated Communist Party members with previous military experience. Canada and the United States did not have compulsory military service in the 1920's and 1930's but many recent European immigrants arrived in Canada after completing their compulsory military service and therefore were preferred recruits. Among the Hungarian volunteers, information is available on only 7 with previous military experience and 4 of these served in the First World War. There was an attempt to recruit volunteers that were ideologically prepared and this required a record of some service in the Communist Party and the affiliated organizations.<sup>16</sup> This accounts for the relatively high average age of the Canadian volunteers including those from the Hungarian community. The high average age of the Hungarian volunteers indicates that the decision to volunteer for Spain was made by men who were mature and, no doubt, aware of the consequences of their decision.

Of the 55 Hungarian volunteers from Canada for whom a birthplace is given, 54 were born in the Austro-Hungarian Empire, that is, in Hungary. Approximately 75% of all Canadian volunteers were born outside of Canada. The year of immigration to Canada for 23 individuals is known: 21 had arrived during the years 1926-30 with the largest number (10) in 1929 when the Depression began in October. Two arrived in 1937 and shortly thereafter left for Spain. The known departure dates for 55 Hungarian volunteers indicate that almost all left for Spain in 1937, the large majority during the spring and summer months. The last two Hungarian volunteers arrived in Spain in February,

1938. The new Foreign Enlistment Act may have encouraged some volunteers to leave before the implementation dates. On the basis of 50 individuals, the average age of the Hungarian volunteers in January, 1939 was 36.3; the Canadian average was just over 33 years old. The last known address of 73 volunteers was in urban and industrial centres with the largest numbers coming from Lethbridge (14), Toronto (12), Montreal (7), Windsor (6) and Drumheller (4) and individual volunteers from various centres across Canada. This list of Canadian cities was generally similar to the last address of many of the other Canadian volunteers. The occupational backgrounds of 33 volunteers can be identified and portray a group of volunteers with solid working-class backgrounds. There were labourers (10), miners (6), farmers/labourers (5), mechanics (3), blacksmiths (3), and one each of the following: cook, waiter, cabinet-maker, shoemaker, moulder, engineer.

Regardless of their ethnocultural origin, potential recruits were interviewed by the Committee to Aid Spanish Democracy. In Toronto, the Committee had its headquarters on Adelaide Street off Bay Street in the same building as the headquarters of the Communist Party of Canada. The Committee interviewed the volunteers and attempted to exclude suspected RCMP agents and Trotskyites. When accepted, the volunteers received a physical examination from a doctor, had to obtain travel documents and were given tickets.<sup>17</sup> The Canadian law against foreign enlistment did have an influence on the need for secrecy and the time of departure. Many of the volunteers from Canada were sent by bus to New York City for embarkation to Europe. Individual volunteers crossed the border at Detroit and made their way to New York City. In other cases, they sailed from Montreal and Quebec City to avoid over-crowding the New York City facilities. A few volunteers left on their own initiative. The volunteers who travelled in organized groups usually landed in Le Havre, France and made their way to Paris. Buses would take them to the south of France and they illegally crossed the Pyrenees on foot under cover of darkness, led by guides. Not all volunteers crossed the Pyrenees successfully. A group of nine Canadian volunteers were intercepted by the French police in February, 1937. They were eventually released and continued on their way to Spain.<sup>18</sup> In one case, arrangements were made to have some of the volunteers leave France by ship, the *Ciudad de Barcelona*. This ship was torpedoed on May 29, 1937 and among the many casualties were two Hungarian volunteers from Canada.

On the other side of the Pyrenees, the volunteers were met by representatives of the International Brigades, taken to Barcelona and assigned to their units. If they spoke English, the volunteers were assigned to an English-language unit such as the Abraham Lincoln or the Mackenzie-Papineau Battalions. Otherwise they were assigned to their language-of-origin units. In the case of the Hungarian volunteers, many were directed to the Rákosi Battalion of the 13th International Brigade. They were trained in Casa Banes, a small village near Barcelona. Since most of the volunteers were expected to have some military experience, training

was short. The Mackenzie-Papineau Battalion was one of the few units that received any form of organized military training for a period of three months.

As the war progressed, the volunteers shared the fate of their respective units. Reports on their activities were included in the *Daily Clarion* and in the *Kanadai Magyar Munkás*. Some of those who were wounded were usually sent to other units such as rear support units or the artillery after recovery. An unspecified number of Canadian volunteers returned to Canada during 1937-1938 due to wounds<sup>19</sup> or 'of their own accord'. Among those who returned were at least 6 Hungarian volunteers. In September, 1938, the International Brigades including the Mackenzie-Papineau Battalion were withdrawn from the front lines by the Republican government. It was hoped that this action would oblige the Franco forces to withdraw the German and Italian units fighting on their side. This did not prove to be the case. On October 28, 1938, the International Brigades marched through Barcelona in a memorable farewell parade.

With the situation growing increasingly chaotic in the closing stages of the war, many Canadian volunteers were separated from their units; others deserted or simply disappeared.<sup>20</sup> At least one Hungarian volunteer was listed as a deserter. At this time, those volunteers who were Party members were evaluated according to their political activities and reports were prepared which were sent to the Communist Party of Canada. They were categorized as cadres: good, mediocre, bad and very bad. The standards were very high and the judgements were severe. The political work of volunteers during their term as prisoners-of-war was also evaluated.<sup>21</sup> In addition, non-Party members were evaluated according to their political activities and awareness. Some of the volunteers with distinguished records of service were recommended for Party work within the Hungarian community in Canada. For example, one report stated that "... Comrade Deza [*sic* Dezső?] Beke No. 1 on your characteristics list is a very good Hungarian comrade and should be fully utilized in the work among the Hungarian People in Alberta... (from) Lethbridge, Hungarian, Very Good, Best among Hungarians, Speaks English fluently."<sup>22</sup> Throughout the Spanish Civil War, the political attitudes of the volunteers were also closely monitored especially in the case of those who were CPC members. There was great suspicion of Trotskyites, anarchists and other political groups which were perceived as rivals. Inevitably, problems relating to administration and military discipline were interpreted in political terms. Complete adherence to the Communist Party position on events in Spain was expected and demanded. After demobilization, volunteers were sought to defend Barcelona but two of the Hungarian volunteers turned in their CPC cards rather than volunteer.<sup>23</sup>

In December-January, 1939, the volunteers crossed the Pyrenees into France along with the Republican Spanish refugees. They were confined in internment camps in Gurs in southern France and awaited repatriation.<sup>24</sup> In this manner, many volunteers who served in other units joined the Canadian volunteers who had served in the Mackenzie-Papineau Battalion and thereby became collectively known as 'the Mac-Paps'.

The Canadian volunteers were interviewed by Canadian immigration officials and placed into one of three categories: Canadian citizens by birth, Canadian citizens (British born or naturalized in Canada) and aliens (those who claimed to have been legally landed and resided in Canada for five years or more). The volunteers with passports, Canadian birth certificates and naturalization papers were readily readmitted to Canada.<sup>25</sup> Those who were aliens had to prove that they had resided in Canada for at least five years. Two Hungarian volunteers were refused re-admission to Canada because they did not have at least five years of residency in Canada.<sup>26</sup>

The volunteers who were allowed to return to Canada travelled through England to Halifax and then by train to Toronto where they were greeted with a large parade on February 5, 1939 at the Toronto railway station. They then dispersed across Canada to their own communities and attempted to reestablish their lives. Some remained active in the Communist Party of Canada and various other left-wing organizations while others apparently abandoned political activity and "disappeared" into the anonymity of everyday life. Two Hungarians from Canada remained in Spain as prisoners-of-war and were released only in 1941 and 1942. Of the 74 men whose fate is known, 53 eventually left Spain, including 3 who had been taken prisoners-of-war; 14 were killed in action, 4 declared missing in Spain including 2 as prisoners-of-war.

During the Second World War, some of the Canadian volunteers claimed that they attempted to enrol in the Canadian armed forces but they were rejected because of their service in Spain.<sup>27</sup> When the Communist Party of Canada was banned by the federal government in the summer of 1940, the leadership was arrested and interned. However, after the Nazi German invasion of the Soviet Union in June, 1941, attitudes in some federal government departments changed towards the members of the Communist Party. In 1943 there were attempts by the Special Operations Executive, a British military organization, to recruit Spanish Civil War veterans in Canada for special operations in central Europe and the Balkans. At least two Hungarian veterans were contacted for possible service in Hungary.<sup>28</sup>

An association of all Canadian veterans was formed in September, 1938,<sup>29</sup> and over the years held regular meetings and reunions. The veterans maintained an active interest in Spanish events and organized protests when possible to assist Spanish refugees and political prisoners.<sup>30</sup> One of the main objectives of their association was the attempt to gain official recognition from the Canadian government. The onset of the Second World War and especially the Cold War placed the events and the participants of the Spanish Civil War in a different and changing context. Among those Hungarian volunteers who returned to Canada, the establishment of a Communist regime in Hungary encouraged many to return to Hungary. After the Second World War, 14 veterans returned to Hungary and one went to live in the Soviet Union.<sup>31</sup>

After the death of Francisco Franco and the democratization of the Spanish government, a group of Canadian veterans organized a tour to Spain in

August-September, 1979 to revisit their old battlegrounds. There were other visits on various anniversaries and for special events.<sup>32</sup> Recently, their campaign for official recognition resulted in some success. On June 4, 1995, Canada's National Historic Sites and Monuments Board erected a plaque in honour of the Mackenzie-Papineau volunteers at Queen's Park in Toronto.<sup>33</sup> However, a motion in the House of Commons on May 25, 1998 to obtain veteran status for the surviving Mac-Pap veterans was defeated.<sup>34</sup>

The motivations of the Hungarian Canadian volunteers to enrol in the International Brigades were largely based on their experiences in the labour movement in Canada and their subsequent political radicalization during the Depression of the early 1930s. For some volunteers, the events in Europe with the rise of Nazi Germany were the main reason for their political activities and their departure for Spain. In almost every case, their reasons for volunteering for Spain was due to their opposition to fascism.

Their political involvement in the Canadian left-wing movement of the 1930's was due to the existence of a number of associations and organizations that eagerly sought their membership and participation. The Hungarian community in Canada was characterized by a polarization along political lines into left- and right-wing organizations. The membership of the left-wing organizations grew to protest the economic conditions of Depression. Their formal and informal networks provided a motivated and organized body of ready recruits when volunteers were sought for Spain. Some went to Spain to test the courage of their own political convictions. Others who were CPC members, were sent by the CPC to Spain to be tested and hardened. The experience strengthened the political beliefs and convictions of some and shattered the political careers of others. During the Spanish Civil War and after, these organizations provided the volunteers and the returned veterans with encouragement and support. The volunteers who remained active in the Canadian left-wing organizations, were held in high esteem and respected throughout their lives as veterans of the International Brigades and as representatives of the epic ideological struggles of the 1930s.

These veterans also represented a cross-section of the hundreds of thousands of Canadians and recent immigrants who felt the full impact of the Depression during the 1930s in Canada and who were fully aware of the threat of fascism in Europe. The friendships which were forged and the commitments made during the Depression and especially during their service in the International Brigades, endured for many decades providing a core of dedicated members and leaders in the Canadian left-wing movement.

Many continued to fight the ideological battles from this period and their involvement in the Spanish Civil War remained the defining experience of their lives. As a result, many of the myths and legends surrounding the role of the International Brigades in the Spanish Civil War continue to be mixed with serious academic research on this subject. The contributions of the Canadian volunteers remain largely unknown in Canadian historiography and the specific

Hungarian participation rarely receives any mention in Hungarian Canadian literature and studies. With the end of the Cold War, the opening of the Moscow archives and the RCMP surveillance records, it is now possible to re-examine from a historical perspective the participation of Canadians in the Spanish Civil War and dispel some of the myths and legends that have characterized this episode in Canadian history.

## NOTES

1. "Private Member's Bill: Veteran Status," *Mac-Pap News* (Newsletter), May, 1998.
2. *Ottawa Citizen*, May 17, May 22, May 26, 1998.
3. Many volunteers from Canada served in various units on the Republican side and were not included in earlier estimates for a variety of reasons. The following is an estimate of the known general ethnocultural origins of 1043 Canadian volunteers:

Scandinavian	139
British Isles and Ireland	152
Yugoslav	73
European-Slavic	430
European (including Hungarians)	168
North American and other	81
<b>Total</b>	<b>1043</b>

4. There are three full-length studies on the Canadian participation: Victor Howard (Hoar) with Mac Reynolds, *The Mackenzie-Papineau Battalion: The Canadian Contingent in the Spanish Civil War*. 2nd ed. (Ottawa, 1986), and William C. Beeching, *Canadian Volunteers: Spain 1936-39* (Regina, 1989). Mr. Beeching was a volunteer and an active member of the Communist Party of Canada. A recent publication is by Mark Zuehlke, *The Gallant Cause: Canadians in the Spanish Civil War, 1936-1939* (Vancouver: Whitecap Books, 1996).

5. Biographical information was compiled from various published sources and from the following collections at the National Archives of Canada (hereafter NAC): Tim Buck Papers (MG32 G3), Mackenzie-Papineau Battalion Collection (MG30 E173), Mackenzie-Papineau Battalion Fonds (MG10 K2) [Moscow Reels], Immigration Branch Records (RG76 Vol. 429, File 635107), CBC Program Archives, Spanish Civil War, Oral History Interviews by Mac Reynolds (1965).

6. There are several files in the Canadian Security and Intelligence Service Records (RG146) at the National Archives with information on the volunteers: Mackenzie-Papineau Battalion, Recruiting for Spanish Army-Canada, Friends of the Mackenzie-Papineau Battalion, Edward Cecil-Smith, Mackenzie-Papineau Battalion (Veterans of). These files were originally part of the records of the Security Service of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP).

7. It should be mentioned that the Soviet Union did provide military support to the Republican Government in the form of men and supplies.

8. Because the International Brigades participated in the defence of Madrid in 1936, the Franco forces believed that they were responsible for prolonging the civil war which was ruining Spain; see the memoirs of a British pro-Franco volunteer, Peter Kemp, *Mine Were of Trouble* (London, 1957), p. 169.

9. NAC, Ernest Lapointe Papers (MG27 III B 10) Vol. 22, File: Spanish Civil War — Canadian Volunteers and the Foreign Enlistment Act, 1936-39.

10. There is a list of 90 volunteers in the Mackenzie-Papineau Battalion Collection (MG30 E 173, Volume 3, File 31- List of Hungarian Canadians who fought in Spain, 1936-39). Part of this list is based on 'Dan Beke's List'. According to statistics maintained by scholars in Hungary, 115 of the total of 965 Hungarians who fought in the Spanish Civil War had come from Canada. Private letter, Professor Iván Harsányi to Myron Momryk, 16 Aug. 1998. For Harsányi's book, see n. 31 below.

11. For information on RCMP attempts to monitor the volunteer movement, see James Dobno and Robin Rowland, *Undercover. Cases of the RCMP's Most Secret Operative* (Markham, Ont., 1991), pp. 228-236; see also Canadian Security Intelligence Service (CSIS), Mackenzie-Papineau Battalion Records.

12. See newspaper articles on RCMP actions in investigating Canadian applicants for passports to travel to Europe in *The Winnipeg Free Press*, 15 January, 1937; *Ottawa Citizen*, 20 February, 1937; and *Regina Leader*, 14 January, 1937.

13. For further information on the Foreign Enlistment Act, see Thor Erik Frohn-Nielsen, *Canada's Foreign Enlistment Act: Mackenzie King's Expedient Response to the Spanish Civil War*, M.A. Thesis, University of British Columbia, 1982.

14. See Sándor Vörös, *American Commissar* (Philadelphia: Chilton Company, 1961), pages 201-220, for his political activities in the Hamilton community in 1929-30. Vörös later volunteered for Spain and served in the Abraham Lincoln Battalion.

15. For historical information on the political evolution of the Hungarian community in Canada during the 1930's, see N.F. Dreisziger with M.L. Kovacs, Paul Bódy and Bennett Kovrig, *Struggle and Hope: The Hungarian-Canadian Experience* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart Ltd., 1982) especially the chapter, "A Decade of Setbacks: The 1930's." See also Carmela Patrias, *Patriots and Proletarians. Politicizing Hungarian Immigrants in Interwar Canada* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1994).

16. According to information in a few autobiographies of volunteers in the Mackenzie-Papineau Battalion Collection (MG30 E173), members of the Communist Party of Canada required permission from the Party to volunteer for Spain.

17. For information on the recruiting process in Toronto see the chapter, "The Spanish Civil War; 1937" in Peter Hunter, *Which side are you on, boys: Canadian life on the left* (Toronto, 1988), pp. 109-112.

18. *Montreal Daily Star*, Feb. 6, 1937, "Canadians Halted on Way to Spain."

19. *Daily Clarion*, 13 August, 1938, "Mac-Pap Vets Returned;" 28 August, 1938, "26 Vets Returned."

20. An unknown number remained prisoners of the Franco forces after the civil war was over. For example, in February, 1940, there were six prisoners who claimed Canadian citizenship or residency. See NAC, RG25 G1 A3A, Vol. 1833, File 291-h, Assistance for Canadians captured in Spain, 1939-1943. In the Miranda de Ebro Concentration Camp in Spain in November, 1942, there were 31 Poles, 2 Ukrainians and

15 Yugoslavs; see Carl Geiser, *Prisoners of the Good Fight. The Spanish Civil War 1936-39* (Westport, 1986), p. 258.

21. NAC, Mackenzie-Papineau Battalion Collection, MG10 K2, Reel K-262, Fond 545, opis 6, delo 540.

22. NAC, Mackenzie-Papineau Battalion Collection, MG10 K2, Reel K-26 1 , Fond 545, opis 6, delo 537.

23. *Ibid.*

24. The debate within the Canadian government regarding the return of the volunteers is discussed in an article by John A. Munro, "Canada and the Civil War in Spain, Repatriation of the Mackenzie-Papineau Battalion," in *External Affairs* (Monthly Bulletin of the Department of External Affairs), Vol. XXIII, No. 2, February 1971, pp. 52-58.

25. NAC, Immigration Branch Records, RG76, vol. 429, file 635107, pt. 2.

26. *Ibid.*

27. *Daily Clarion*, September 9, 1939, "Thanks Mac-Paps Defence Minister for Service Offer."

28. Andrew Durovecz, *My Secret Mission* (Toronto, 1993), p. 46.

29. *Daily Clarion*, 2 September, 1938, William Kardash was the first President. The veterans organization was re-established in 1947; see, "Mac-Pap Vets Organize New National Body," *Canadian Tribune*, December 6, 1947.

30. *Canadian Tribune*, March 6, 1948, "Mac-Pap vets protest Franco death sentence." *Canadian Tribune*, November 29, 1948, "Ross Russell... delegate of the Mac-Pap Battalion in Paris, France during Free Spain Week," December 1-8, 1948.

31. Service in the International Brigades in post-war Hungary was not a guarantee for political or even physical survival. László Rajk, political commissar of the Rákosi Battalion, was tried in 1949 and "confessed" among other things that he was an agent of the police of the Admiral Horthy regime in Spain. Rajk was executed for his "crimes." See Hugh Thomas, *The Spanish Civil War* (New York: Harper and Row, 1977), pp. 953-954. Jenő Györkei, in his *Magyar önkéntesek a spanyol polgárháboruban* [Hungarian Volunteers in the Spanish Civil War] (Budapest, 1977), states that 12% of the Magyar volunteers in Spain were from Canada (p. 107). See also, Imre Gergely, *Magyarok a spanyol néppel, 1936-1939* [Hungarians with the Spanish People] (Budapest: Kossuth Könyvkiadó, 1977). For a more recent volume on the participation in the Spanish Civil War of volunteers from Hungary see Iván Harsányi, ed., *A spanyol polgárháború és magyar önkéntesei* [The Spanish Civil War and its Hungarian Volunteers] (Budapest: Antifasiszta Füzetek, 1996).

32. *Toronto Star*, Oct. 30, 1988, "Canada's Forgotten Heroes Return to Spain."

33. *Newsletter*, Association of Veterans and Friends of the Mackenzie-Papineau Battalion International Brigades in Spain, May, 1995; *Globe and Mail*, June 5, 1995, "Plaque Unveiled in Honour of Mac-Pap Battalion."

34. *Ottawa Citizen*, 26 May, 1998, "Battalion denied veteran status."

## Appendix

### Nominal List of Hungarian Volunteers from Canada in the International Brigades

Alarro (rH)  
Balogh, Mihaly  
Bartus, Ignac (rH)  
Beke, Daniel (Dezso) (rH)  
Berthus, Paul (rH)  
Bodnar, Walter  
Bogner, Julius  
Bollo, Joseph  
Borics, Joseph (KIA)  
Brunner, Emeric  
Bubancz, John  
Buckovic, Michael (POW)  
Chodur, Michael (KIA)  
Cisko, Andrew  
Cseriszuyes, Sandor  
Cserny, Joseph (KIA)  
Csirmaz, Mihaly  
Csokc, Andrew (MIA)  
Erdei, Gabor  
Farkas, Alexander  
Farkas, Ferenc  
Ferencz, John (KIA)  
Filkohazi, Emeric (KIA)  
Gal, John (rH)  
Gilian, Andrew (KIA)  
Gombos, Anthony (SU)  
Gyuricza, Matyas (rH)  
Hadaszi, Karoly (KIA)  
Herter, Adam (rH)  
Horwath, Vandal (rH)  
Illes, Paul (POW/MIA)  
Jaczku, Istvan  
Jeney, Gabor (KIA)  
Jokvach, Joseph  
Juhas, Alexander (rH)  
Kasza, John  
Koleszat, Geza  
Kondas, George  
Koradi, Alex  
Kosma, Denis  
Kovacs, Istvan  
Krizan, Joseph  
Krizan, Antal (KIA)  
Magyar, Joseph  
Medgyse, Karoly (POW)  
Merges, Elmer  
Mezei, Elmer  
Michna, Mihaly (KIA)  
Milas, Nikola  
Mocik, Istvan (KIA)  
Molnar, James Imre  
Mozer, Joseph

Nadanicek, Janos  
Ordog, Frank  
Osirmaz, Mihaly  
Pacsuta, Gyorgy  
Pocik, Stener  
Pretz, Adam (KIA)  
Princze, Joseph (MIA)  
Racz, Imre (KIA)  
Ragvacs, Janos (KIA)  
Rajki, Mathias  
Ribas  
Satiz, Joseph  
Schmeltzer, George  
Schmidt, Joseph  
Schneider, John  
Sirko, Louis  
Sisco, Alexander (MIA)  
Soltesz, Joseph (rH)  
Steiner, Sandor  
Straus, Gyorgy (rH)  
Szabari, Gabriel  
Szabo, John  
Syrkovics, Istvan  
Szucsco, Paul (POW)  
Takacs, George (rH)  
Tomasi, Michael (rH)  
Toth, Dezso  
Toth, George  
Tuz, Imre  
Varga, Andrew  
Varga, George  
Varro, Ferencz (rH)  
Vasas, Zoltan (POW/MIA)  
Vitez, Imre

### Explanation of abbreviations in the parentheses:

KIA Killed in Action  
MIA Missing in Action  
POW Prisoner of War  
rH Returned to Hungary  
SU Relocated to the Soviet Union

**Note:** The names here are reproduced as they had appeared in the original document, i.e. without diacritical marks.